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Verses of the Elder Bhikkhunis

Pāli English

A Translation of the Therīgāthā by

BHIKKHUNI SOMA

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by

Ayya Soma

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Translation Process

The primary source used was the digital Mahāsaṅgīti edition of the Pali Tipiṭaka. The text was translated from the Pali by Ayyā Somā without consulting any other translations first. It was then proof-read and edited by Bhante Suddhaso. The end result was compared to other English translations currently available, in particular the ones by Bhante Sujato and Anagarika Mahendra.

Translation Description

This translation of the Therīgathā was intentionally done without consulting or referencing any of the information provided in the commentaries. It therefore uses the original Pāli text of the poems as its only basis to deduce context and terminology choice.

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The Chapter of theOnes

1. Aññatarātherīgāthā:
Verses of a Certain Unknown Elder

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.
Homage to the Bhagavant, the Arahant, the Sammāsambuddha.

“Sukhaṁ supāhi therike,
Katvā coḷena pārutā;
Upasanto hi te rāgo,
Sukkhaḍākaṁ va kumbhiyan”ti.

“Sleep with ease, Elder,
wrapped in a rag.
Your passion has been appeased
like a dry vegetable in a pot.”

Itthaṁ sudaṁ aññatarā therī apaññātā bhikkhunī gāthaṁ abhāsitthāti.
Thus a certain unknown Elder Bhikkhunī spoke this verse.

2. Muttātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Muttā

“Mutte muccassu yogehi,
cando rāhuggahā iva;
Vippamuttena cittena,
anaṇā bhuñja piṇḍakan”ti.

“Muttā, free yourself from bondage,
like the moon from Rāhu’s grasp.
And with a liberated mind,
eat alms free of debt.”

Itthaṁ sudaṁ bhagavā muttaṁ sikkhamānaṁ imāya gāthāya abhiṇhaṁ ovadatīti.
Thus the Bhagavant often exhorts the trainee Muttā with this verse.

3. Puṇṇātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Puṇṇā

“Puṇṇe pūrassu dhammehi,
Cando pannaraseriva;
Paripuṇṇāya paññāya,
Tamokhandhaṁ padālayā”ti.

“Puṇṇā, grow full of good qualities,
like the moon on the fifteenth day.
Full of wisdom,
destroy this mass of darkness.”

Itthaṁ sudaṁ puṇṇā therī gāthaṁ abhāsitthāti.
Thus Puṇṇā the Elder spoke this verse.

4. Tissātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Tissā

“Tisse sikkhassu sikkhāya,
mā taṁ yogā upaccaguṁ;
Sabbayogavisaṁyuttā,
cara loke anāsavā”ti.

“Tissā, train yourself with discipline,
do not let bonds tie you down.
All bonds unbound,
walk in the world free from influences.”

… Tissā therī ….
The Elder Tissā

5. Aññatarātissātherīgāthā:
Verses of Another Elder Named Tissā

“Tisse yuñjassu dhammehi,
khaṇo taṁ mā upaccagā;
Khaṇātītā hi socanti,
nirayamhi samappitā”ti.

“Tissā, bind yourself to the Dhamma,
waste no time.
Those who waste time sorrow,
when they arrive in hell.”

… Aññatarā tissā therī ….
Another Elder Named Tissā

6. Dhīrātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Dhīrā

“Dhīre nirodhaṁ phusehi,
Saññāvūpasamaṁ sukhaṁ;
Ārādhayāhi nibbānaṁ,
Yogakkhemamanuttaran”ti.

“Dhīrā, touch cessation,
the joyful pacification of perception.
Attain Nirvana,
the utmost safety from bondage.”

… Dhīrā therī ….
The Elder Dhīrā

7. Vīrātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Vīrā

“Vīrā vīrehi dhammehi,
bhikkhunī bhāvitindriyā;
Dhāreti antimaṁ dehaṁ,
jetvā māraṁ savāhinin”ti.

“Vīrā, with the qualities of a hero,
a bhikkhunī with well-developed spiritual powers.
She carries her last body,
having conquered Māra and his army.”

… Vīrā therī ….
The Elder Vīrā

8. Mittātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Mittā

“Saddhāya pabbajitvāna,
mitte mittaratā bhava;
Bhāvehi kusale dhamme,
yogakkhemassa pattiyā”ti.

“Now that you have gone forth out of faith,
Mittā, appreciate your spiritual companions.
Cultivate wholesome qualities
for the attainment of safety from bondage.”

… Mittā therī ….
The Elder Mittā

9. Bhadrātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Bhadrā

“Saddhāya pabbajitvāna,
bhadre bhadraratā bhava;
Bhāvehi kusale dhamme,
yogakkhemamanuttaran”ti.

“Now that you have gone forth out of faith,
Bhadrā, be devoted to goodness.
Cultivate wholesome qualities,
the utmost safety from bondage.”

… Bhadrā therī ….
The Elder Bhadrā

10. Upasamātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Upasamā

“Upasame tare oghaṁ,
maccudheyyaṁ suduttaraṁ;
Dhārehi antimaṁ dehaṁ,
jetvā māraṁ savāhinin”ti.

“Upasamā, pass over the flood,
the sphere of death so difficult to cross.
Carry your last body,
having conquered Māra and his army.”

… Upasamā therī ….
The Elder Upasamā

11. Muttātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Muttā

“Sumuttā sādhumuttāmhi,
tīhi khujjehi muttiyā;
Udukkhalena musalena,
patinā khujjakena ca;
Muttāmhi jātimaraṇā,
bhavanetti samūhatā”ti.

“I am well released and fully free,
freed from the three deceits,
of the mortar, the pestle,
and the deceitful husband.
I am free from birth and death,
I have uprooted that which leads to any state of existence.”

… Muttā therī ….
The Elder Muttā

12. Dhammadinnātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Dhammadinnā

“Chandajātā avasāyī,
Manasā ca phuṭā siyā;
Kāmesu appaṭibaddhacittā,
Uddhaṁsotāti vuccatī”ti.

“When one’s ferverous nature has been laid down,
when the mind has been expanded
and is not constricted by sensual pleasures—
this is called going against the stream.”

… Dhammadinnā therī ….
The Elder Dhammadinnā

13. Visākhātherīgāthā:
The Elder Visākhā

“Karotha buddhasāsanaṁ,
yaṁ katvā nānutappati;
Khippaṁ pādāni dhovitvā,
ekamante nisīdathā”ti.

“Do what the Buddha taught
and you will have no regrets.
Quickly wash your feet
and sit down to one side.”

… Visākhā therī ….
The Elder Visākhā

14. Sumanātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sumanā

“Dhātuyo dukkhato disvā,
mā jātiṁ punarāgami;
Bhave chandaṁ virājetvā,
upasantā carissasī”ti.

“Having seen the elements as suffering,
do not return to birth.
Having destroyed the fervor for existence,
you will walk in peace.”

… Sumanā therī ….
The Elder Sumanā

15. Uttarātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Uttarā

“Kāyena saṁvutā āsiṁ,
vācāya uda cetasā;
Samūlaṁ taṇhamabbuyha,
sītibhūtāmhi nibbutā”ti.

“I was restrained in body,
speech, and mind.
Having pulled out craving by the roots,
I have become cool and quenched.”

… Uttarā therī ….
The Elder Uttarā

16. Vuḍḍhapabbajitasumanātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sumanā, Gone Forth in Old Age.

“Sukhaṁ tvaṁ vuḍḍhike sehi,
katvā coḷena pārutā;
Upasanto hi te rāgo,
sītibhūtāsi nibbutā”ti.

“Sleep comfortably, old one,
wrapped in a rag.
Your passion has been appeased thus:
it has become cool and quenched.”

… Sumanā vuḍḍhapabbajitā therī ….
The Elder Sumanā, gone forth in old age.

17. Dhammātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Dhammā

“Piṇḍapātaṁ caritvāna,
daṇḍamolubbha dubbalā;
Vedhamānehi gattehi,
tattheva nipatiṁ chamā;
Disvā ādīnavaṁ kāye,
atha cittaṁ vimucci me”ti.

“As I was going for alms,
leaning on a stick,
all my limbs trembled,
and there I fell on the ground.
As I saw the danger in the body,
in that moment, my mind was liberated.”

… Dhammā therī ….
The Elder Dhammā

18. Saṅghātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Saṅghā

“Hitvā ghare pabbajitvā,
hitvā puttaṁ pasuṁ piyaṁ;
Hitvā rāgañca dosañca,
avijjañca virājiya;
Samūlaṁ taṇhamabbuyha,
upasantāmhi nibbutā”ti.

“I left behind the house and went forth.
I left behind child, cattle, and all that is dear.
I left behind passion and aversion,
and I left behind ignorance—by means of dispassion.
Having pulled out craving by the roots,
I am quenched and at peace.”

…
…
Saṅghā therī ….
The Elder Saṅghā

Ekakanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Ones is finished.

The Chapter of theTwos

1. Abhirūpanandātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Abhirūpanandā

“Āturaṁ asuciṁ pūtiṁ,
passa nande samussayaṁ;
Asubhāya cittaṁ bhāvehi,
ekaggaṁ susamāhitaṁ.

“Nandā, see this body as diseased,
impure, and rotten.
Cultivate awareness of the unattractive
with a well-collected, one-pointed mind.

Animittañca bhāvehi,
mānānusayamujjaha;
Tato mānābhisamayā,
upasantā carissasī”ti.

Develop objectless meditation;
give up the underlying tendency toward conceit.
Once you fully understand conceit,
you will walk in peace.”

Itthaṁ sudaṁ abhirūpanandā therī gāthāyo abhāsitthāti.
Thus the Bhagavant often exhorts the trainee Abhirūpanandā with these verses.

2. Jentātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Jentā

“Ye ime satta bojjhaṅgā,
maggā nibbānapattiyā;
Bhāvitā te mayā sabbe,
yathā buddhena desitā.

“These seven factors of enlightenment
are the path for attaining Nirvana.
I have developed all of them,
as taught by the Buddha.

Diṭṭho hi me so bhagavā,
antimoyaṁ samussayo;
Vikkhīṇo jātisaṁsāro,
natthi dāni punabbhavo”ti.

I have seen the Bhagavant,
this is my last body.
Destroyed is rebirth in saṁsāra,
now there is no coming back to any state of being.”

Itthaṁ sudaṁ jentā therī gāthāyo abhāsitthāti.
Thus Jentā the Elder spoke these verses.

3. Sumaṅgalamātātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sumaṇgala's Mother

"Sumuttikā sumuttikā,
Sādhumuttikāmhi musalassa;
Ahiriko me chattakaṁ vāpi,
Ukkhalikā me deḍḍubhaṁ vāti.

"Well released, well released,
I am well released and free from the pestle.
I am shielded from my shameless husband
and from the kettle that hisses like a water snake.

Rāgañca ahaṁ dosañca,
Cicciṭi cicciṭīti vihanāmi;
Sā rukkhamūlamupagamma,
Aho sukhanti sukhato jhāyāmī"ti.

Hiss! Hiss! I destroy
passion and aversion.
Having gone to the root of a tree,
'O bliss!' I happily meditate."

… Sumaṅgalamātā therī ….
The Elder Sumaṇgala's Mother

4 Aḍḍhakāsitherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Aḍḍhakāsi

“Yāva kāsijanapado,
suṅko me tatthako ahu;
Taṁ katvā negamo agghaṁ,
aḍḍhenagghaṁ ṭhapesi maṁ.

“In the country of Kāsi,
I was purchased.
The townsman set a price,
but settled for half of it.

Atha nibbindahaṁ rūpe,
nibbindañca virajjahaṁ;
Mā puna jātisaṁsāraṁ,
sandhāveyyaṁ punappunaṁ;
Tisso vijjā sacchikatā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanan”ti.

Then I was disenchanted by form;
disenchanted, I became dispassionate.
May I not be reborn again in saṁsāra,
may I not return again and again!
Now I have realized the three knowledges
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.”

… Aḍḍhakāsi therī ….
The Elder Aḍḍhakāsi

5. Cittātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Cittā

“Kiñcāpi khomhi kisikā,
gilānā bāḷhadubbalā;
Daṇḍamolubbha gacchāmi,
pabbataṁ abhirūhiya.

“I was skin and bones,
sick, and very weak;
but, leaning on a stick,
I climbed the mountain.

Saṅghāṭiṁ nikkhipitvāna,
pattakañca nikujjiya;
Sele khambhesimattānaṁ,
tamokhandhaṁ padāliyā”ti.

I laid down the outer robe
and overturned the bowl;
settled on a stone,
I destroyed this mass of darkness.”

… Cittā therī ….
The Elder Cittā

6. Mettikātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Mettikā

“Kiñcāpi khomhi dukkhitā,
dubbalā gatayobbanā;
Daṇḍamolubbha gacchāmi,
pabbataṁ abhirūhiya.

“I was in pain,
weak, and long past my youth,
but leaning on a stick,
I climbed the mountain.

Nikkhipitvāna saṅghāṭiṁ,
pattakañca nikujjiya;
Nisinnā camhi selamhi,
atha cittaṁ vimucci me;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanan”ti.

I laid down the outer robe
and overturned the bowl,
sitting down on a stone,
in that moment, my mind was liberated.
I obtained the three knowledges
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.”

… Mettikā therī ….
The Elder Mettikā

7. Mittātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Mittā

“Cātuddasiṁ pañcadasiṁ,
yā ca pakkhassa aṭṭhamī;
Pāṭihāriyapakkhañca,
aṭṭhaṅgasusamāgataṁ.

“On the fourteenth day, on the fifteenth day,
on the eighth day of a fortnight,
and on extraordinary fortnights,
I observed the Uposatha,

Uposathaṁ upāgacchiṁ,
devakāyābhinandinī;
Sājja ekena bhattena,
muṇḍā saṅghāṭipārutā;
Devakāyaṁ na patthehaṁ,
vineyya hadaye daran”ti.

complete in all its eight factors,
seeking delight in the company of Devas.
Today with one meal a day,
a shaven head, wrapped in a robe,
I do not aspire to be a Deva,
as I have removed distress from my heart.”

… Mittā therī ….
The Elder Mittā

8. Abhayamātutherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Abhayā

“Uddhaṁ pādatalā amma,
adho ve kesamatthakā;
Paccavekkhassumaṁ kāyaṁ,
asuciṁ pūtigandhikaṁ.

“Mother, I contemplated the body
from the soles of the feet
all the way to the top of the head,
seeing it as impure and fetid.

Evaṁ viharamānāya,
sabbo rāgo samūhato;
Pariḷāho samucchinno,
sītibhūtāmhi nibbutā”ti.

Dwelling in this way,
I uprooted all passion
and extinguished all heat:
I have become cool and quenched.”

… Abhayamātā therī ….
The Elder Abhayā

9. Abhayātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Abhaya's Mother

"Abhaye bhiduro kāyo,
yattha satā puthujjanā;
Nikkhipissāmimaṁ dehaṁ,
sampajānā satīmatī.

"Abhayā, this body is transient:
this is what worldly beings should attend to.
I will cast aside this body
with mindfulness and clear comprehension.

Bahūhi dukkhadhammehi,
appamādaratāya me;
Taṇhakkhayo anuppatto,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanan"ti.

Amidst so much suffering,
I devoted myself to heedfulness.
I have obtained the destruction of craving,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha."

… Abhayā therī ….
The Elder Abhayā's Mother

10. Sāmātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sāmā

“Catukkhattuṁ pañcakkhattuṁ,
vihārā upanikkhamiṁ;
Aladdhā cetaso santiṁ,
citte avasavattinī;
Tassā me aṭṭhamī ratti,
yato taṇhā samūhatā.

“Four times, five times,
I went outside.
I had not attained peace of mind
and I had no power over the mind.
Amidst so much suffering,
I devoted myself to heedfulness.

Bahūhi dukkhadhammehi,
appamādaratāya me;
Taṇhakkhayo anuppatto,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanan”ti.

It’s now been the eighth night
since craving has been uprooted.
I have obtained the destruction of craving
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.”

…
…
Sāmā therī ….
The Elder Sāmā

Dukanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Twos is finished.

The Chapter of theThrees

1. Aparāsāmātherīgāthā:
Verses of Another Elder Sāmā

“Paṇṇavīsativassāni,
yato pabbajitāya me;
Nābhijānāmi cittassa,
samaṁ laddhaṁ kudācanaṁ.

“For twenty-five years
since I had gone forth,
I had not once
gained any peace of mind.

Aladdhā cetaso santiṁ,
citte avasavattinī;
Tato saṁvegamāpādiṁ,
saritvā jinasāsanaṁ.

I had not attained peace of mind
and I had no power over the mind.
Then, I recollected the teaching of the Victorious One,
and I was met with a sense of urgency.

Bahūhi dukkhadhammehi,
appamādaratāya me;
Taṇhakkhayo anuppatto,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ;
Ajja me sattamī ratti,
yato taṇhā visositā”ti.

Amidst so much suffering,
I devoted myself to heedfulness.
I obtained the destruction of craving
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.
Today is the seventh night

from when craving was made to wither."

… Aparā sāmā therī ….
Another Elder Sāmā

2. Uttamātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Uttamā

“Catukkhattuṁ pañcakkhattuṁ,
vihārā upanikkhamiṁ;
Aladdhā cetaso santiṁ,
citte avasavattinī.

“Four times, five times,
I went outside.
I had not attained peace of mind
and I had no power over the mind.

Sā bhikkhuniṁ upagacchiṁ,
yā me saddhāyikā ahu;
Sā me dhammamadesesi,
khandhāyatanadhātuyo.

I approached a bhikkhunī
whom I trusted.
She taught me the Dhamma:
the khandhas, elements, and sense domains.

Tassā dhammaṁ suṇitvāna,
Yathā maṁ anusāsi sā;
Sattāhaṁ ekapallaṅkena,
Nisīdiṁ pītisukhasamappitā;
Aṭṭhamiyā pāde pasāresiṁ,
Tamokhandhaṁ padāliyā”ti.

I listened to her Dhamma,
followed her instructions,
and sat cross-legged for seven days,
dedicated to bliss and happiness.
On the eighth day I stretched out my feet,

having destroyed this mass of darkness."

… Uttamā therī ….
The Elder Uttamā

3. Aparāuttamātherīgāthā:
Another Elder Uttamā

“Ye ime satta bojjhaṅgā,
maggā nibbānapattiyā;
Bhāvitā te mayā sabbe,
yathā buddhena desitā.

“These seven factors of enlightenment
are the path for attaining Nirvana.
I have developed all of them,
as taught by the Buddha.

Suññatassānimittassa,
lābhinīhaṁ yadicchakaṁ;
Orasā dhītā buddhassa,
nibbānābhiratā sadā.

I am one who gains at will
the objectless and emptiness.
I am the legitimate daughter of the Buddha,
ever so fond of Nirvana.

Sabbe kāmā samucchinnā,
ye dibbā ye ca mānusā;
Vikkhīṇo jātisaṁsāro,
natthi dāni punabbhavo”ti.

All sensual pleasures have been cut off,
both divine and human.
Destroyed is rebirth in saṁsāra,
now there is no coming back to any state of being.”

… Aparā uttamā therī ….
Another Elder Uttamā

4. Dantikātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Dantikā

“Divāvihārā nikkhamma,
gijjhakūṭamhi pabbate;
Nāgaṁ ogāhamuttiṇṇaṁ,
nadītīramhi addasaṁ.

“Having ventured out from my day’s abiding
at Vulture’s Peak Mountain,
I saw an elephant going in and out
the river by the shore.

Puriso aṅkusamādāya,
‘dehi pādan’ti yācati;
Nāgo pasārayī pādaṁ,
puriso nāgamāruhi.

A man took a pole with a hook,
and said to him: ‘Hand me your foot.’
The elephant held out his foot,
and the man mounted him.

Disvā adantaṁ damitaṁ,
manussānaṁ vasaṁ gataṁ;
Tato cittaṁ samādhesiṁ,
khalu tāya vanaṁ gatā”ti.

Once I saw the untamed tamed,
brought under human control,
from there I sought one-pointedness of mind—
this is why I went to the forest.”

… Dantikā therī ….
The Elder Dantikā

5. Ubbiritherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Ubbirī

“Amma jīvāti vanamhi kandasi,
Attānaṁ adhigaccha ubbiri;
Cullāsītisahassāni,
Sabbā jīvasanāmikā;
Etamhāḷāhane daḍḍhā,
Tāsaṁ kamanusocasi”.

“Mother, you cry in the forest for Jīvā.
Ubbirī, come to your senses!
Eighty-four thousand beings,
all with the name Jīvā,
were burnt in that cremation ground:
you sorrowed over all of them in the same way.”

“Abbahī vata me sallaṁ,
duddasaṁ hadayassitaṁ;
Yaṁ me sokaparetāya,
dhītusokaṁ byapānudi.

“At last, you pulled out the thorn,
difficult to see, stuck to my heart.
Losing my daughter filled me with grief,
but now that grief is gone.

Sājja abbūḷhasallāhaṁ,
Nicchātā parinibbutā;
Buddhaṁ dhammañca saṅghañca,
Upemi saraṇaṁ munin”ti.

Today the thorn has been pulled out;
I am free of craving, fully quenched.
I go to the Sage for refuge

in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha."

… Ubbirī therī ….
The Elder Ubbirī

6. Sukkātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sukkā

“Kiṁme katā rājagahe manussā,
Madhuṁ pītāva acchare;
Ye sukkaṁ na upāsanti,
Desentiṁ buddhasāsanaṁ.

“What are these people in Rājagaha doing?
They are like drunken nymphs,
not bothering to sit near Sukkā,
as she explains the Buddha’s teachings.

Tañca appaṭivānīyaṁ,
asecanakamojavaṁ;
Pivanti maññe sappaññā,
valāhakamivaddhagū.

That which counters craving
is like nectar,
which the wise allow to seep in,
like rain falling on travelers.

Sukkā sukkehi dhammehi,
vītarāgā samāhitā;
Dhāreti antimaṁ dehaṁ,
jetvā māraṁ savāhinin”ti.

Sukkā has such bright qualities,
she is free from passion, and has a collected mind.
She carries her last body,
having conquered Māra and his army.”

… Sukkā therī ….
The Elder Sukkā

7. Selātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Selā

“Natthi nissaraṇaṁ loke,
kiṁ vivekena kāhasi;
Bhuñjāhi kāmaratiyo,
māhu pacchānutāpinī”.

“There is no escape in the world,
so what will you do in seclusion?
Enjoy sensual pleasures,
do not regret it later.”

“Sattisūlūpamā kāmā,
khandhāsaṁ adhikuṭṭanā;
Yaṁ tvaṁ ‘kāmaratiṁ’ brūsi,
‘aratī’ dāni sā mama.

“Sensual pleasures are like the handle of an axe,
and one’s khandhas the executioner’s block.
The appealing sensual pleasures that you talk about
are no longer appealing to me.

Sabbattha vihatā nandī,
Tamokhandho padālito;
Evaṁ jānāhi pāpima,
Nihato tvamasi antakā”ti.

In this way all fixation is annihilated,
and the mass of darkness destroyed.
Thus be aware, Wicked One,
Death—you are destroyed!”

… Selā therī ….
The Elder Selā

8. Somātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Somā

“Yaṁ taṁ isīhi pattabbaṁ,
ṭhānaṁ durabhisambhavaṁ;
Na taṁ dvaṅgulapaññāya,
sakkā pappotumitthiyā”.

“Whatever can be attained by the seers,
that stage so hard to reach,
cannot be attained by a woman,
with her wisdom as small as two fingers.”

“Itthibhāvo no kiṁ kayirā,
cittamhi susamāhite;
Ñāṇamhi vattamānamhi,
sammā dhammaṁ vipassato.

“How does being a woman have anything to do
with a well-collected mind,
when knowledge is present,
and one sees rightly into Dhamma?

Sabbattha vihatā nandī,
Tamokhandho padālito;
Evaṁ jānāhi pāpima,
Nihato tvamasi antakā”ti.

In this way all fixation is annihilated,
the mass of darkness destroyed.
Thus be aware, Wicked One,
Death—you are destroyed!”

…
…
Somā therī ….

The Elder Somā

Tikanipāto niṭṭhito.
Chapter of the Threes is finished.

The Chapter of theFours

1. Bhaddākāpilānītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Bhaddā Kāpilānī

“Putto buddhassa dāyādo,
kassapo susamāhito;
Pubbenivāsaṁ yovedi,
saggāpāyañca passati.

“Kassapa, son and heir of the Buddha,
has a well-collected mind.
He knows his past lives,
sees heaven and hell.

Atho jātikkhayaṁ patto,
abhiññāvosito muni;
Etāhi tīhi vijjāhi,
tevijjo hoti brāhmaṇo.

He has reached the destruction of birth,
he is an accomplished sage with perfect insight.
He is a a brahmin
who possesses the three knowledges.

Tatheva bhaddā kāpilānī,
tevijjā maccuhāyinī;
Dhāreti antimaṁ dehaṁ,
jetvā māraṁ savāhiniṁ.

In the same way Bhaddā Kāpilānī
possesses the three knowledges, has left behind death,
and carries her last body,
having conquered Māra and his army.

Disvā ādīnavaṁ loke,
ubho pabbajitā mayaṁ;
Tyamha khīṇāsavā dantā,

sītibhūtamha nibbutā”ti.

Having seen the danger in the world,
we both went forth.
We have exhausted and tamed all the influences,
we have become cool and quenched.”

…
…
Bhaddā kāpilānī therī ….
The Elder Bhaddā Kāpilānī

Catukkanipāto niṭṭhito.
Chapter of the Fours is finished.

The Chapter of theFives

1. Aññataratherīgāthā:
Verses of a Certain Unknown Elder

“Paṇṇavīsativassāni,
yato pabbajitā ahaṁ;
Nāccharāsaṅghātamattampi,
cittassūpasamajjhagaṁ.

“For twenty-five years,
since I had gone forth,
I had not experienced serenity of mind,
not even for a split second.

Aladdhā cetaso santiṁ,
kāmarāgenavassutā;
Bāhā paggayha kandantī,
vihāraṁ pāvisiṁ ahaṁ.

I had not attained peace of mind,
I was overflowing with lust,
and with my arms in the air, crying aloud,
I entered the monastery.

Sā bhikkhuniṁ upāgacchiṁ,
yā me saddhāyikā ahu;
Sā me dhammamadesesi,
khandhāyatanadhātuyo.

I approached a bhikkhunī
whom I trusted.
She taught me the Dhamma:
the khandhas, elements, and sense domains.

Tassā dhammaṁ suṇitvāna,
ekamante upāvisiṁ;
Pubbenivāsaṁ jānāmi,

dibbacakkhu visodhitaṁ.

After I listened to her Dhamma,
I sat down to one side.
I know my past lives,
I have purified my divine eye.

Cetopariccañāṇañca,
sotadhātu visodhitā;
Iddhīpi me sacchikatā,
patto me āsavakkhayo;
Chaḷabhiññā sacchikatā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanan”ti.

I am able to read the minds of others,
and I have purified the ear element.
I have attained psychic powers,
and reached the destruction of the influences.
I have realized the six special knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.”

… Aññatarā therī ….
A Certain Unknown Elder

2. Vimalātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Vimalā

“Mattā vaṇṇena rūpena,
sobhaggena yasena ca;
Yobbanena cupatthaddhā,
aññāsamatimaññihaṁ.

“Intoxicated with this beautiful body,
as well as glory, success,
and my youth,
I despised anyone who was not my equal.

Vibhūsetvā imaṁ kāyaṁ,
sucittaṁ bālalāpanaṁ;
Aṭṭhāsiṁ vesidvāramhi,
luddo pāsamivoḍḍiya.

Dressed in flashy clothes,
prattling on,
I stood at the entrance of the pleasure house,
like a hunter setting traps.

Piḷandhanaṁ vidaṁsentī,
guyhaṁ pakāsikaṁ bahuṁ;
Akāsiṁ vividhaṁ māyaṁ,
ujjagghantī bahuṁ janaṁ.

I flaunted my assets
and often exposed my private parts;
I deceived in many ways,
and I made fun of many people.

Sājja piṇḍaṁ caritvāna,
muṇḍā saṅghāṭipārutā;
Nisinnā rukkhamūlamhi,

avitakkassa lābhinī.

Today I walk for alms,
with a shaven-head, wrapped in a robe.
Seated at the root of a tree,
I attain absence of thought.

Sabbe yogā samucchinnā,
ye dibbā ye ca mānusā;
Khepetvā āsave sabbe,
sītibhūtāmhi nibbutā"ti.

All bonds have been cut off,
both divine and human.
Having cast away all influences,
I have become cool and quenched."

… Vimalā purāṇagaṇikā therī ….
The Elder Vimalā, a Former Courtesan.

3. Sīhātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sīhā

“Ayoniso manasikārā,
kāmarāgena aṭṭitā;
Ahosiṁ uddhatā pubbe,
citte avasavattinī.

“Because of careless attention,
I was afflicted with lust.
I was restless,
and I had no power over the mind.

Pariyuṭṭhitā klesehi,
subhasaññānuvattinī;
Samaṁ cittassa na labhiṁ,
rāgacittavasānugā.

Overwhelmed by defilements,
I chased anything attractive.
Controlled by craving,
I could not attain tranquility of mind.

Kisā paṇḍu vivaṇṇā ca,
satta vassāni cārihaṁ;
Nāhaṁ divā vā rattiṁ vā,
sukhaṁ vindiṁ sudukkhitā.

Emaciated, ugly, feeble,
I wandered for seven years,
never finding happiness either by day or by night.
I was full of suffering.

Tato rajjuṁ gahetvāna,
pāvisiṁ vanamantaraṁ;
Varaṁ me idha ubbandhaṁ,

yañca hīnaṁ punācare.

Then I took a rope
and entered into the forest.
Better for me to be strangled here,
than to go back to the inferior life.

Daḷhapāsaṁ karitvāna,
rukkhasākhāya bandhiya;
Pakkhipiṁ pāsaṁ gīvāyaṁ,
atha cittaṁ vimucci me”ti.

I made a strong noose,
and hung it from the branch of a tree.
As soon as I placed the noose around my neck
my mind was liberated.”

… Sīhā therī ….
The Elder Sīhā

4. Sundarīnandātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sundarīnandā

“Āturaṁ asuciṁ pūtiṁ,
passa nande samussayaṁ;
Asubhāya cittaṁ bhāvehi,
ekaggaṁ susamāhitaṁ.

“Nandā, see this body as diseased,
impure, and rotten.
Cultivate awareness of the unattractive,
with a collected one-pointed mind.

Yathā idaṁ tathā etaṁ,
yathā etaṁ tathā idaṁ;
Duggandhaṁ pūtikaṁ vāti,
bālānaṁ abhinanditaṁ.

As this is, so is that,
as that is, so is this.
Only fools enjoy
the vile smell of rotten winds.”

Evametaṁ avekkhantī,
rattindivamatanditā;
Tato sakāya paññāya,
abhinibbijjha dakkhisaṁ”.

“I looked at it in this way
relentlessly, by day and by night,
saw it for myself with wisdom,
and had a breakthrough.

“Tassā me appamattāya,
vicinantiyā yoniso;
Yathābhūtaṁ ayaṁ kāyo,

diṭṭho santarabāhiro.

I relied on my heedfulness
and wise comprehension,
to accurately see this body
inside and out.

Atha nibbindahaṁ kāye,
ajjhattañca virajjahaṁ;
Appamattā visaṁyuttā,
upasantāmhi nibbutā”ti.

Then I was disenchanted by the body,
and I became dispassionate.
Heedful, unbound,
I am quenched and at peace.”

… Sundarīnandā therī ….
The Elder Sundarīnandā

5. Nanduttarātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Nanduttarā

“Aggiṁ candañca sūriyañca,
devatā ca namassihaṁ;
Nadītitthāni gantvāna,
udakaṁ oruhāmihaṁ.

“I used to worship fire, the moon,
the sun, and the Devas.
I would go to the river ford
and descend into the water.

Bahūvatasamādānā,
aḍḍhaṁ sīsassa olikhiṁ;
Chamāya seyyaṁ kappemi,
rattiṁ bhattaṁ na bhuñjahaṁ.

I took on many spiritual practices:
I shaved half of my head,
I set my sleeping place on the ground,
and ate no food at night.

Vibhūsāmaṇḍanaratā,
nhāpanucchādanehi ca;
Upakāsiṁ imaṁ kāyaṁ,
kāmarāgena aṭṭitā.

At the same time I enjoyed jewelry and makeup,
I pampered this body
with baths and massages,
afflicted with lust.

Tato saddhaṁ labhitvāna,
pabbajiṁ anagāriyaṁ;
Disvā kāyaṁ yathābhūtaṁ,

kāmarāgo samūhato.

Eventually I acquired faith,
and went forth into homelessness.
After I accurately saw the body,
I uprooted lust.

Sabbe bhavā samucchinnā,
icchā ca patthanāpi ca;
Sabbayogavisaṁyuttā,
santiṁ pāpuṇi cetaso”ti.

All states of existence have been cut off,
as well as desire and aspiration.
All bonds unbound,
I have attained peace of mind.”

… Nanduttarā therī ….
The Elder Nanduttarā

6. Mittākāḷītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Mittākāḷī

“Saddhāya pabbajitvāna,
agārasmānagāriyaṁ;
Vicariṁhaṁ tena tena,
lābhasakkāraussukā.

“I went forth out of faith,
from the home life into homelessness;
I wandered here and there,
longing for gain and honor.

Riñcitvā paramaṁ atthaṁ,
hīnamatthaṁ asevihaṁ;
Kilesānaṁ vasaṁ gantvā,
sāmaññatthaṁ na bujjhihaṁ.

Disregarding the highest aim,
I pursued an inferior goal.
Controlled by defilements,
I did not understand the real purpose of the contemplative life.

Tassā me ahu saṁvego,
nisinnāya vihārake;
Ummaggapaṭipannāmhi,
taṇhāya vasamāgatā.

Seated in a dwelling place,
I was struck with a sense of urgency:
‘I have entered upon the wrong path,
I am under the control of craving!

Appakaṁ jīvitaṁ mayhaṁ,
jarā byādhi ca maddati;
Purāyaṁ bhijjati kāyo,

na me kālo pamajjituṁ.

Decay and sickness are trampling
my trifling life.
There is no time to waste
before this body falls apart.'

Yathābhūtamavekkhantī,
khandhānaṁ udayabbayaṁ;
Vimuttacittā uṭṭhāsiṁ,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanan"ti.

In conformity with the truth, I discerned
the rise and fall of the khandhas.
I stood up with a liberated mind,
having completed the teaching of the Buddha."

… Mittā kāḷī therī ….
The Elder Mittākaḷī

7. Sakulātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sakulā

“Agārasmiṁ vasantīhaṁ,
dhammaṁ sutvāna bhikkhuno;
Addasaṁ virajaṁ dhammaṁ,
nibbānaṁ padamaccutaṁ.

“I was home
when I heard the Dhamma from a bhikkhu.
I saw the stainless Dhamma,
the path to Nirvana, that which never dies.

Sāhaṁ puttaṁ dhītarañca,
dhanadhaññañca chaḍḍiya;
Kese chedāpayitvāna,
pabbajiṁ anagāriyaṁ.

I left behind daughter and son,
wealth and grain.
I had my hair cut off,
and went forth into homelessness.

Sikkhamānā ahaṁ santī,
bhāventī maggamañjasaṁ;
Pahāsiṁ rāgadosañca,
tadekaṭṭhe ca āsave.

I trained myself peacefully,
cultivating the path forward.
I discarded passion and aversion,
and all other influences.

Bhikkhunī upasampajja,
pubbajātimanussariṁ;
Dibbacakkhu visodhitaṁ,

vimalaṁ sādhubhāvitaṁ.

As an ordained bhikkhunī
I remembered my previous lives.
I purified my divine eye,
well developed and spotless.

Saṅkhāre parato disvā,
hetujāte palokite;
Pahāsiṁ āsave sabbe,
sītibhūtāmhi nibbutā”ti.

I saw formations as alien,
arisen due to conditions, and subject to decay.
I eliminated all the influences,
I have become cool and quenched.”

… Sakulā therī ….
The Elder Sakulā

8. Soṇātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Soṇā

“Dasa putte vijāyitvā,
asmiṁ rūpasamussaye;
Tatohaṁ dubbalā jiṇṇā,
bhikkhuniṁ upasaṅkamiṁ.

“I gave birth to ten sons
from this same body.
As I became old and feeble,
I approached a bhikkhunī.

Sā me dhammamadesesi,
khandhāyatanadhātuyo;
Tassā dhammaṁ suṇitvāna,
kese chetvāna pabbajiṁ.

She taught me the Dhamma:
the khandhas, elements, and sense domains.
After I listened to her Dhamma,
I cut off my hair and went forth.

Tassā me sikkhamānāya,
dibbacakkhu visodhitaṁ;
Pubbenivāsaṁ jānāmi,
yattha me vusitaṁ pure.

From training with her,
my divine eye was purified.
I know my past lives,
where I dwelt previously.

Animittañca bhāvemi,
ekaggā susamāhitā;
Anantarāvimokkhāsiṁ,

anupādāya nibbutā.

I cultivate objectless meditation
with a well-collected and one-pointed mind.
I was immediately liberated,
quenched because of non-grasping.

Pañcakkhandhā pariññātā,
tiṭṭhanti chinnamūlakā;
Dhi tavatthu jare jamme,
natthi dāni punabbhavo"ti.

The five khandhas are fully understood,
they remain with roots destroyed.
What does it matter that I am decrepit?
There is now no coming back to any state of being."

… Soṇā therī ….
The Elder Soṇā

9. Bhaddākuṇḍalakesātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā

“Lūnakesī paṅkadharī,
ekasāṭī pure cariṁ;
Avajje vajjamatinī,
vajje cāvajjadassinī.

“In the past I would wander with only one robe,
my head shaved and my body covered in mud.
I would see the blameworthy as blameless,
and the blameless as blameworthy.

Divāvihārā nikkhamma,
gijjhakūṭamhi pabbate;
Addasaṁ virajaṁ buddhaṁ,
bhikkhusaṅghapurakkhataṁ.

Having ventured out from my day’s abiding
at Vulture’s Peak Mountain,
I saw the stainless Buddha,
and the honored monastic Saṅgha.

Nihacca jāṇuṁ vanditvā,
sammukhā añjaliṁ akaṁ;
‘Ehi bhadde’ti maṁ avaca,
sā me āsūpasampadā.

I knelt in respect before him,
my hands in añjali.
‘Come, Bhaddā!,’ he said.
That was my higher ordination.

Ciṇṇā aṅgā ca magadhā,
vajjī kāsī ca kosalā;
Anaṇā paṇṇāsa vassāni,

raṭṭhapiṇḍaṁ abhuñjahaṁ.

I traveled to Aṅga, Magadha,
Vajji, Kāsi, and Kosala.
Free of debt, for fifty years
I ate the country's almsfood.

Puññaṁ vata pasavi bahuṁ,
Sappañño vatāyaṁ upāsako;
Yo bhaddāya cīvaraṁ adāsi,
Vippamuttāya sabbaganthehī"ti.

Surely he accumulated so much merit,
that wise lay devotee,
who gave a robe to Bhaddā,
released from all fetters."

… Bhaddā kuṇḍalakesā therī ….
The Elder Bhaddā Kuṇḍalakesā

10. Paṭācārātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Paṭācārā

“Naṅgalehi kasaṁ khettaṁ,
bījāni pavapaṁ chamā;
Puttadārāni posentā,
dhanaṁ vindanti māṇavā.

“Young men plough the field,
sowing seeds in the earth.
As they nourish wife and children,
young men prosper.

Kimahaṁ sīlasampannā,
satthusāsanakārikā;
Nibbānaṁ nādhigacchāmi,
akusītā anuddhatā.

I have perfect morality,
I follow the teaching of the Teacher,
I am not lazy nor conceited,
so why have I not attained Nirvana?

Pāde pakkhālayitvāna,
udakesu karomahaṁ;
Pādodakañca disvāna,
thalato ninnamāgataṁ.

After washing my feet,
I observed the water,
and noticed the foot-washing water
flowing from top to bottom.

Tato cittaṁ samādhesiṁ,
assaṁ bhadraṁvajāniyaṁ;
Tato dīpaṁ gahetvāna,

vihāraṁ pāvisiṁ ahaṁ;
Seyyaṁ olokayitvāna,
mañcakamhi upāvisiṁ.

From there I sought one-pointedness of mind,
like a good thoroughbred horse.
Later, I took the lamp,
and entered my dwelling.
I checked the bed
and took a seat on a mat.

Tato sūciṁ gahetvāna,
vaṭṭiṁ okassayāmahaṁ;
Padīpasseva nibbānaṁ,
vimokkho ahu cetaso”ti.

I took the needle
and pulled out the wick.
The emancipation of my mind
was like the extinguishing of a lamp.”

… Paṭācārā therī ….
The Elder Paṭācārā

11. Tiṁsamattātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Thirty Elders

“Musalāni gahetvāna,
dhaññaṁ koṭṭenti māṇavā;
Puttadārāni posentā,
dhanaṁ vindanti māṇavā.

“With a pestle,
young men pound grain.
As they nourish wife and children,
young men prosper.

Karotha buddhasāsanaṁ,
yaṁ katvā nānutappati;
Khippaṁ pādāni dhovitvā,
ekamante nisīdatha;
Cetosamathamanuyuttā,
karotha buddhasāsanaṁ”.

Do what the Buddha taught,
and you will have no regrets.
Quickly wash your feet,
and sit down on one side.
Commit to tranquility of mind—
do what the Buddha taught.”

Tassā tā vacanaṁ sutvā,
paṭācārāya sāsanaṁ;
Pāde pakkhālayitvāna,
ekamantaṁ upāvisuṁ;
Cetosamathamanuyuttā,
akaṁsu buddhasāsanaṁ.

Upon hearing these words,

the teaching of Paṭācārā,
they washed their feet
and sat down to one side.
Committing to tranquility of mind,
they followed the teachings of the Buddha.

Rattiyā purime yāme,
pubbajātimanussaruṁ;
Rattiyā majjhime yāme,
dibbacakkhuṁ visodhayuṁ;
Rattiyā pacchime yāme,
tamokhandhaṁ padālayuṁ.

In the first watch of the night,
they remembered their previous lives.
In the second watch of the night,
they purified the divine eye.
In the third watch of the night,
they destroyed this mass of darkness.

Uṭṭhāya pāde vandiṁsu,
“katā te anusāsanī;
Indaṁva devā tidasā,
saṅgāme aparājitaṁ;
Purakkhatvā vihassāma,
tevijjāmha anāsavā”ti.

They stood up and paid homage at her feet:
“We did as you instructed.
We now possess the three knowledges and are free from influences,
and will dwell revering you
just as the thirty Devas honor Indra,
unconquered in battle.”

Itthaṁ sudaṁ tiṁsamattā therī bhikkhuniyo paṭācārāya santike aññaṁ byākariṁsūti.

In this way Thirty Elder Bhikkhunīs attained perfect knowledge in the presence of Paṭācārā.

12. Candātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Candā

“Duggatāhaṁ pure āsiṁ,
vidhavā ca aputtikā;
Vinā mittehi ñātīhi,
bhattacoḷassa nādhigaṁ.

“I was destitute,
a widow without children,
friends or relatives.
Food and cloth were difficult to come by,

Pattaṁ daṇḍañca gaṇhitvā,
bhikkhamānā kulā kulaṁ;
Sītuṇhena ca ḍayhantī,
satta vassāni cārihaṁ.

so I would take bowl and walking-stick,
and beg from family to family.
I wandered for seven years,
consumed by heat and cold.

Bhikkhuniṁ puna disvāna,
annapānassa lābhiniṁ;
Upasaṅkamma avocaṁ,
‘pabbajjaṁ anagāriyaṁ’.

When I saw a bhikkhunī
accepting food and drink,
I approached her and said:
‘I want to go forth into homelessness.’

Sā ca maṁ anukampāya,
pabbājesi paṭācārā;
Tato maṁ ovaditvāna,

paramatthe niyojayi.

Out of compassion for me,
Paṭācārā allowed me to go forth.
Then she exhorted me,
and spurred me on to the highest aim.

Tassāhaṁ vacanaṁ sutvā,
akāsiṁ anusāsaniṁ;
Amogho ayyāyovādo,
tevijjāmhi anāsavā"ti.

I heard and
followed her instruction.
Ayya's guidance was not in vain:
possessing the three knowledges, I am free from influences."

…
…
Candā therī ….
The Elder Candā

Pañcakanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Fives is finished.

The Chapter of theSixes

1. Pañcasatamattātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Five Hundred Elders

“Yassa maggaṁ na jānāsi,
āgatassa gatassa vā;
Taṁ kuto cāgataṁ sattaṁ,
‘mama putto’ti rodasi.

“You do not know how
a being comes and goes,
or whence that being came,
yet you weep, ‘oh, my child!’

Maggañca khossa jānāsi,
āgatassa gatassa vā;
Na naṁ samanusocesi,
evaṁdhammā hi pāṇino.

If you really knew how
a being comes and goes,
you would not mourn,
for you would understand that this is the nature of a sentient being.

Ayācito tatāgacchi,
nānuññāto ito gato;
Kutoci nūna āgantvā,
vasitvā katipāhakaṁ;
Itopi aññena gato,
tatopaññena gacchati.

Unasked they come,
without permission they leave.
Whence did they come?
How long will they stay?
Departing one place,

one goes to another.

Peto manussarūpena,
saṁsaranto gamissati;
Yathāgato tathā gato,
kā tattha paridevanā".

One who has died in the form of a human being,
will be reborn again and again.
As one comes, so one goes,
so why lament since that is so?"

"Abbahī vata me sallaṁ,
duddasaṁ hadayassitaṁ;
Yā me sokaparetāya,
puttasokaṁ byapānudi.

"At last, you pulled out the thorn,
difficult to see, stuck to my heart.
I was overcome with grief after the loss of my child,
but now that grief has been dispelled.

Sājja abbūḷhasallāhaṁ,
Nicchātā parinibbutā;
Buddhaṁ dhammañca saṅghañca,
Upemi saraṇaṁ muniṁ".

Today the thorn has been pulled out,
I am free of craving, fully quenched.
I go to the Sage for refuge
in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha."

Itthaṁ sudaṁ pañcasatamattā therī bhikkhuniyo …
In this way Five Hundred Elder Bhikkhunīs spoke…
pe….

2. Vāseṭṭhītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Vāseṭṭhi

“Puttasokenahaṁ aṭṭā,
khittacittā visaññinī;
Naggā pakiṇṇakesī ca,
tena tena vicārihaṁ.

“When I lost my child I was taken over by grief;
I went deranged, I lost my mind.
Naked and with messy hair,
I wandered here and there,

Vīthi saṅkārakūṭesu,
susāne rathiyāsu ca;
Acariṁ tīṇi vassāni,
khuppipāsāsamappitā.

staying in heaps of rubbish,
at the side of a road, or in a cemetery.
I wandered for three years,
afflicted by hunger and thirst.

Athaddasāsiṁ sugataṁ,
nagaraṁ mithilaṁ pati;
Adantānaṁ dametāraṁ,
sambuddhamakutobhayaṁ.

When I arrived at the town of Mithilā,
and I saw the one faring well,
tamer of the untamed,
the self-enlightened one, fearless everywhere,

Sacittaṁ paṭiladdhāna,
vanditvāna upāvisiṁ;
So me dhammamadesesi,

anukampāya gotamo.

I returned to sanity.
I paid respects and sat down.
Gotama taught me the Dhamma
out of compassion.

Tassa dhammaṁ suṇitvāna,
pabbajiṁ anagāriyaṁ;
Yuñjantī satthuvacane,
sacchākāsiṁ padaṁ sivaṁ.

After I heard his Dhamma,
I went forth into homelessness.
I bound myself to the words of the Teacher;
I realized the path of joy.

Sabbe sokā samucchinnā,
pahīnā etadantikā;
Pariññātā hi me vatthū,
yato sokāna sambhavo”ti.

All woes have been cut off,
abandoned, finished.
Now I have fully understood
how grief comes into being.”

… Vāseṭṭhī therī ….
The Elder Vāseṭṭhī

3. Khemātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Khemā

“Daharā tvaṁ rūpavatī,
ahampi daharo yuvā;
Pañcaṅgikena turiyena,
ehi kheme ramāmase”.

“You are young and beautiful,
I am also a young lad.
Come, Khemā, let’s have a good time
with heavenly music.”

“Iminā pūtikāyena,
āturena pabhaṅgunā;
Aṭṭiyāmi harāyāmi,
kāmataṇhā samūhatā.

“This putrid body,
diseased and brittle,
only brings trials and tribulations.
I have uprooted craving for sensual pleasures.

Sattisūlūpamā kāmā,
khandhāsaṁ adhikuṭṭanā;
Yaṁ ‘tvaṁ kāmaratiṁ’ brūsi,
‘aratī’ dāni sā mama.

Sensual pleasures are like the handle of an axe,
and one’s khandhas the executioner’s block.
The appealing sensual pleasures that you talk about
are no longer appealing to me.

Sabbattha vihatā nandī,
tamokhandho padālito;
Evaṁ jānāhi pāpima,

nihato tvamasi antaka.

In this way all fixation is annihilated,
the mass of darkness destroyed.
Thus be aware, Wicked One,
Death—you are destroyed!

Nakkhattāni namassantā,
aggiṁ paricaraṁ vane;
Yathābhuccamajānantā,
bālā suddhimamaññatha.

I used to pay homage to constellations,
worshiping fire in the forest.
Ignorant of truth,
I was a fool with a misconception of purity.

Ahañca kho namassantī,
sambuddhaṁ purisuttamaṁ;
Pamuttā sabbadukkhehi,
satthusāsanakārikā”ti.

But now I pay homage to the Buddha,
the most excellent of men.
Liberated from all suffering,
I follow the teaching of the Teacher.”

… Khemā therī ….
The Elder Khemā

4. Sujātātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sujātā

“Alaṅkatā suvasanā,
mālinī candanokkhitā;
Sabbābharaṇasañchannā,
dāsīgaṇapurakkhatā.

“Bejeweled and all dolled up,
wearing flower garlands, scented with sandalwood,
I was completely covered with adornments,
attended by a following of servants.

Annaṁ pānañca ādāya,
khajjaṁ bhojjaṁ anappakaṁ;
Gehato nikkhamitvāna,
uyyānamabhihārayiṁ.

After taking food and drink,
many tasty dishes and a generous amount of grains,
I left home,
and went to the park.

Tattha ramitvā kīḷitvā,
āgacchantī sakaṁ gharaṁ;
Vihāraṁ daṭṭhuṁ pāvisiṁ,
sākete añjanaṁ vanaṁ.

There I had a good time, played around,
and then went back to my own house.
Since I wanted to see a monastery,
I went into Añjana forest at Sāketa.

Disvāna lokapajjotaṁ,
vanditvāna upāvisiṁ;
So me dhammamadesesi,

anukampāya cakkhumā.

There I saw the Buddha, shedding light on the world.
I paid respects and sat down.
The Seer taught me the Dhamma
out of compassion.

Sutvā ca kho mahesissa,
saccaṁ sampaṭivijjhahaṁ;
Tattheva virajaṁ dhammaṁ,
phusayiṁ amataṁ padaṁ.

After hearing the Great Sage,
I penetrated the truth.
There I touched the stainless Dhamma,
the path to the deathless.

Tato viññātasaddhammā,
pabbajiṁ anagāriyaṁ;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
amoghaṁ buddhasāsanan"ti.

Then, because I had become aware of the true Dhamma,
I went forth into homelessness.
I obtained the three knowledges,
the teaching of the Buddha was not in vain."

… Sujātā therī ….
The Elder Sujātā

5. Anopamātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Anopamā

“Ucce kule ahaṁ jātā,
bahuvitte mahaddhane;
Vaṇṇarūpena sampannā,
dhītā majjhassa atrajā.

“I was Majjha’s daughter:
well-born,
with much wealth and property,
endowed with beauty.

Patthitā rājaputtehi,
seṭṭhiputtehi gijjhitā;
Pitu me pesayī dūtaṁ,
detha mayhaṁ anopamaṁ.

Sons of kings pursued me,
sons of wealthy merchants desired me.
One sent out a messenger for my father:
‘Give me Anopamā!

Yattakaṁ tulitā esā,
tuyhaṁ dhītā anopamā;
Tato aṭṭhaguṇaṁ dassaṁ,
hiraññaṁ ratanāni ca.

However much she is worth,
your daughter Anopamā,
I will give you eight times as much
in gold and gems.’

Sāhaṁ disvāna sambuddhaṁ,
lokajeṭṭhaṁ anuttaraṁ;
Tassa pādāni vanditvā,

ekamantaṁ upāvisiṁ.

When I saw the Self-Enlightened One,
the supreme in the world, the unsurpassable one,
I paid homage at his feet,
and sat down to one side.

So me dhammamadesesi,
anukampāya gotamo;
Nisinnā āsane tasmiṁ,
phusayiṁ tatiyaṁ phalaṁ.

Gotama taught me the Dhamma
out of compassion.
Sitting on that seat,
I reached the third fruit.

Tato kesāni chetvāna,
pabbajiṁ anagāriyaṁ;
Ajja me sattamī ratti,
yato taṇhā visositā"ti.

Then I cut off my hair,
and went forth into homelessness.
Today is the seventh night
from when craving was made to wither."

… Anopamā therī ….
The Elder Anopamā

6. Mahāpajāpatigotamītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Mahāpajāpati Gotamī

“Buddha vīra namo tyatthu,
sabbasattānamuttama;
Yo maṁ dukkhā pamocesi,
aññañca bahukaṁ janaṁ.

“Homage to you, Buddha, Hero!
Best of all beings,
who released me and many others
from suffering.

Sabbadukkhaṁ pariññātaṁ,
Hetutaṇhā visositā;
Bhāvito aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo,
Nirodho phusito mayā.

All suffering is fully understood,
craving, its cause, has been made to wither,
the Eightfold Path has been developed,
and I have attained cessation.

Mātā putto pitā bhātā,
ayyakā ca pure ahuṁ;
Yathābhuccamajānantī,
saṁsariṁhaṁ anibbisaṁ.

In the past I was a mother, a child, a father, a brother,
and a grandmother.
Blind to the truth,
I returned again and again, never finding in the darkness what I sought.

Diṭṭho hi me so bhagavā,
antimoyaṁ samussayo;
Vikkhīṇo jātisaṁsāro,

natthi dāni punabbhavo.

I have seen the Bhagavant—
indeed, this is my last body.
Destroyed is rebirth in saṁsāra,
now there is no coming back to any state of being.

Āraddhavīriye pahitatte,
Niccaṁ daḷhaparakkame;
Samagge sāvake passe,
Esā buddhāna vandanā.

See the disciples on the path—
established in energy, self-directed,
always making a sincere effort:
this is paying homage to the Buddhas!

Bahūnaṁ vata atthāya,
Māyā janayi gotamaṁ;
Byādhimaraṇatunnānaṁ,
Dukkhakkhandhaṁ byapānudī"ti.

Indeed, for the benefit of many beings,
Māyā gave birth to Gotama.
Sickness, death,
and the mass of suffering are vanquished."

… Mahāpajāpatigotamī therī ….
The Elder Mahāpajāpati Gotamī

7. Guttātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Guttā

“Gutte yadatthaṁ pabbajjā,
hitvā puttaṁ vasuṁ piyaṁ;
Tameva anubrūhehi,
mā cittassa vasaṁ gami.

“Guttā, why did you go forth?
You have left behind child, wealth, and all that is dear.
Practice in this way,
do not be controlled by the mind.

Cittena vañcitā sattā,
mārassa visaye ratā;
Anekajātisaṁsāraṁ,
sandhāvanti aviddasū.

Sentient beings are misguided by the mind,
enjoying the realm of Māra.
Fools wander along in saṁsāra,
running through countless births.

Kāmacchandañca byāpādaṁ,
sakkāyadiṭṭhimeva ca;
Sīlabbataparāmāsaṁ,
vicikicchañca pañcamaṁ.

Interest in sensual pleasures, ill will,
attachment to self-identity,
clinging to rites and rituals,
and the fifth is doubt.

Saṁyojanāni etāni,
pajahitvāna bhikkhunī;
Orambhāgamanīyāni,

nayidaṁ punarehisi.

Once you abandon these fetters,
Bhikkhunī,
you will not return
to the near shore again.

Rāgaṁ mānaṁ avijjañca,
uddhaccañca vivajjiya;
Saṁyojanāni chetvāna,
dukkhassantaṁ karissasi.

Once you forsake passion, conceit, ignorance,
and restlessness,
having cut off the fetters,
you will bring suffering to an end.

Khepetvā jātisaṁsāraṁ,
pariññāya punabbhavaṁ;
Diṭṭheva dhamme nicchātā,
upasantā carissatī"ti.

Once you have discarded birth in saṁsāra,
having fully understood how existence is renewed,
seeing the Dhamma, without cravings,
you will walk in peace."

… Guttā therī ….
The Elder Guttā

8. Vijayātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Vijayā

“Catukkhattuṁ pañcakkhattuṁ,
vihārā upanikkhamiṁ;
Aladdhā cetaso santiṁ,
citte avasavattinī.

“Four times, five times,
I went outside,
I had not attained peace of mind,
and I had no power over the mind.

Bhikkhuniṁ upasaṅkamma,
sakkaccaṁ paripucchahaṁ;
Sā me dhammamadesesi,
dhātuāyatanāni ca.

I approached a bhikkhunī,
and respectfully asked questions.
She taught me the Dhamma:
the elements, the sense domains,

Cattāri ariyasaccāni,
indriyāni balāni ca;
Bojjhaṅgaṭṭhaṅgikaṁ maggaṁ,
uttamatthassa pattiyā.

the Four Noble Truths,
the faculties, the powers,
the enlightenment factors, and the Eightfold Path,
for the attainment of the highest aim.

Tassāhaṁ vacanaṁ sutvā,
karontī anusāsaniṁ;
Rattiyā purime yāme,

pubbajātimanussariṁ.

I heard and
followed her instructions.
In the first watch of the night,
I remembered my previous lives.

Rattiyā majjhime yāme,
dibbacakkhuṁ visodhayiṁ;
Rattiyā pacchime yāme,
tamokhandhaṁ padālayiṁ.

In the second watch of the night,
I purified the divine eye.
In the third watch of the night,
I destroyed this mass of darkness.

Pītisukhena ca kāyaṁ,
Pharitvā vihariṁ tadā;
Sattamiyā pāde pasāresiṁ,
Tamokhandhaṁ padāliyā"ti.

Then I dwelled permeating the body
with bliss and happiness.
On the seventh day I stretched out my feet,
I destroyed this mass of darkness."

…
…
Vijayā therī ….
The Elder Vijayā

Chakkanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Sixes is finished.

The Chapter of theSevens

1. Uttarātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Uttarā

“Musalāni gahetvāna,
dhaññaṁ koṭṭenti māṇavā;
Puttadārāni posentā,
dhanaṁ vindanti māṇavā.

“With a pestle,
young men pound grain.
As they nourish wife and children,
young men prosper.

Ghaṭetha buddhasāsane,
yaṁ katvā nānutappati;
Khippaṁ pādāni dhovitvā,
ekamantaṁ nisīdatha.

Work your way through the teaching of the Buddha,
and you will have no regrets.
Quickly wash your feet,
and sit down to one side.

Cittaṁ upaṭṭhapetvāna,
ekaggaṁ susamāhitaṁ;
Paccavekkhatha saṅkhāre,
parato no ca attato”.

Once the mind
is well-collected and one-pointed,
review all formations
as alien, and not as yourself.”

“Tassāhaṁ vacanaṁ sutvā,
paṭācārānusāsaniṁ;
Pāde pakkhālayitvāna,

ekamante upāvisiṁ.

“Upon hearing these words,
the instructions of Paṭācārā,
I washed my feet,
and sat down to one side.

Rattiyā purime yāme,
pubbajātimanussariṁ;
Rattiyā majjhime yāme,
dibbacakkhuṁ visodhayiṁ.

In the first watch of the night,
I remembered my previous lives.
In the second watch of the night,
I purified the divine eye.

Rattiyā pacchime yāme,
tamokhandhaṁ padālayiṁ;
Tevijjā atha vuṭṭhāsiṁ,
katā te anusāsanī.

In the third watch of the night,
I destroyed this mass of darkness.
I emerged from that possessing the three knowledges:
I did as you instructed.

Sakkaṁva devā tidasā,
saṅgāme aparājitaṁ;
Purakkhatvā vihassāmi,
tevijjāmhi anāsavā”.

I now possess the three knowledges and am free from influences,
and will dwell revering you
just as the thirty Devas honor Indra,
unconquered in battle.”

… Uttarā therī ….

The Elder Uttarā

2. Cālātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Cālā

“Satiṁ upaṭṭhapetvāna,
bhikkhunī bhāvitindriyā;
Paṭivijjhi padaṁ santaṁ,
saṅkhārūpasamaṁ sukhaṁ”.

“I am a bhikkhunī with well-developed spiritual powers.
I established mindfulness,
and mastered the path of peace,
the joyful pacification of formations.”

“Kaṁ nu uddissa muṇḍāsi,
samaṇī viya dissasi;
Na ca rocesi pāsaṇḍe,
kimidaṁ carasi momuhā”.

“On whose account did you shave your head?
You seem like a contemplative,
but you disapprove of dogmas;
why do you roam around confused?”

“Ito bahiddhā pāsaṇḍā,
diṭṭhiyo upanissitā;
Na te dhammaṁ vijānanti,
na te dhammassa kovidā.

“Those who follow dogmas
rely on their views.
They do not know the Dhamma;
they are not masters of the Dhamma.

Atthi sakyakule jāto,
buddho appaṭipuggalo;
So me dhammamadesesi,

diṭṭhīnaṁ samatikkamaṁ.

But the one who was born in the Sakyan clan,
the unrivaled Buddha,
taught me the Dhamma
that transcends views:

Dukkhaṁ dukkhasamuppādaṁ,
Dukkhassa ca atikkamaṁ;
Ariyaṁ caṭṭhaṅgikaṁ maggaṁ,
Dukkhūpasamagāminaṁ.

suffering, the origin of suffering,
the overcoming of suffering,
and the Noble Eightfold Path
leading to the appeasement of suffering.

Tassāhaṁ vacanaṁ sutvā,
vihariṁ sāsane ratā;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ.

After I heard his words,
I dwelled devoted to the teaching.
I obtained the three knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.

Sabbattha vihatā nandī,
tamokhandho padālito;
Evaṁ jānāhi pāpima,
nihato tvamasi antaka".

In this way all fixation is annihilated,
and the mass of darkness destroyed.
Thus be aware, Wicked One,
Death—you are destroyed!"

… Cālā therī ….

The Elder Cālā

3. Upacālātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Upacālā

“Satimatī cakkhumatī,
bhikkhunī bhāvitindriyā;
Paṭivijjhi padaṁ santaṁ,
akāpurisasevitaṁ”.

“I am mindful and of clear sight,
a bhikkhunī with well-developed spiritual powers.
I mastered the path of peace
that is not practiced by vile people.”

“Kiṁ nu jātiṁ na rocesi,
jāto kāmāni bhuñjati;
Bhuñjāhi kāmaratiyo,
māhu pacchānutāpinī”.

“Why don’t you appreciate being born?
When one is born, one enjoys sensual pleasures.
Enjoy the delights of sensual pleasures,
do not regret it later.”

“Jātassa maraṇaṁ hoti,
hatthapādāna chedanaṁ;
Vadhabandhapariklesaṁ,
jāto dukkhaṁ nigacchati.

“From birth there is death,
the severing of hands and feet,
flogging, imprisonment, and hardship;
when one is born, one undergoes suffering.

Atthi sakyakule jāto,
sambuddho aparājito;
So me dhammamadesesi,

jātiyā samatikkamaṁ.

But the one who is born in the Sakyan clan,
Self-Enlightened and Unconquered,
taught me the Dhamma
that transcends birth;

Dukkhaṁ dukkhasamuppādaṁ,
dukkhassa ca atikkamaṁ;
Ariyaṁ caṭṭhaṅgikaṁ maggaṁ,
dukkhūpasamagāminaṁ.

Suffering, the origin of suffering,
the overcoming of suffering,
and the Noble Eightfold Path
leading to the appeasement of suffering.

Tassāhaṁ vacanaṁ sutvā,
vihariṁ sāsane ratā;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ.

After I heard his words,
I dwelled devoted to the teaching.
I obtained the three knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.

Sabbattha vihatā nandī,
tamokhandho padālito;
Evaṁ jānāhi pāpima,
nihato tvamasi antaka".

In this way all fixation is annihilated,
the mass of darkness destroyed.
Thus be aware, Wicked One,
Death—you are destroyed!"

…

…
Upacālā therī ….
The Elder Upacālā

Sattakanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Sevens is finished.

The Chapter of theEights

1. Sīsūpacālātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sīsūpacālā

“Bhikkhunī sīlasampannā,
indriyesu susaṁvutā;
Adhigacche padaṁ santaṁ,
asecanakamojavaṁ”.

“I am a bhikkhunī with perfect morality,
with sense faculties well restrained;
I attained the path of peace,
sweet like nectar.”

“Tāvatiṁsā ca yāmā ca,
tusitā cāpi devatā;
Nimmānaratino devā,
ye devā vasavattino;
Tattha cittaṁ paṇīdhehi,
yattha te vusitaṁ pure”.

“You used to dwell amongst the Tāvatiṃsa, Yāmā,
and Tusitā Devas,
the Nimmānarati Devas,
and the Vasavatti Devas.
Aspire the mind towards
where you dwelt formerly.”

“Tāvatiṁsā ca yāmā ca,
tusitā cāpi devatā;
Nimmānaratino devā,
ye devā vasavattino.

“The Tāvatiṃsa, Yāmā,
and Tusitā Devas,
the Nimmānarati Devas,

and the Vasavatti Devas—

Kālaṁ kālaṁ bhavābhavaṁ,
sakkāyasmiṁ purakkhatā;
Avītivattā sakkāyaṁ,
jātimaraṇasārino.

time after time, one existence after the other,
their first concern is themselves.
They have not gone beyond selfhood;
they wander between birth and death.

Sabbo ādīpito loko,
sabbo loko padīpito;
Sabbo pajjalito loko,
sabbo loko pakampito.

The entire world is ablaze,
the entire world is burning,
the entire world is in flames,
the entire world is shaking.

Akampiyaṁ atuliyaṁ,
aputhujjanasevitaṁ;
Buddho dhammamadesesi,
tattha me nirato mano.

The unshakable, unmatched Dhamma,
not practiced by ordinary people,
is what the Buddha taught,
and that is what my mind enjoys.

Tassāhaṁ vacanaṁ sutvā,
vihariṁ sāsane ratā;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ.

After I heard his words,
I dwelled devoted to the teaching.
I obtained the three knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.

Sabbattha vihatā nandī,
tamokhandho padālito;
Evaṁ jānāhi pāpima,
nihato tvamasi antaka".

In this way all fixation is annihilated,
the mass of darkness destroyed.
Thus be aware, Wicked One,
Death—you are destroyed!"

…
…
Sīsūpacālā therī ….
The Elder Sīsūpacālā

Aṭṭhakanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Eights is finished.

The Chapter of theNines

1. Vaḍḍhamātutherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Vaḍḍha's Mother

"Mā su te vaḍḍha lokamhi,
vanatho āhu kudācanaṁ;
Mā puttaka punappunaṁ,
ahu dukkhassa bhāgimā.

"Vaḍḍha, do not get caught
in the endless thicket of the world.
Oh little child, do not take part in suffering
again and again.

Sukhañhi vaḍḍha munayo,
anejā chinnasaṁsayā;
Sītibhūtā damappattā,
viharanti anāsavā.

Vaḍḍha, the sages dwell easily,
carefree and free from doubt.
They have become cool and tamed,
and abide free from influences.

Tehānuciṇṇaṁ isībhi,
maggaṁ dassanapattiyā;
Dukkhassantakiriyāya,
tvaṁ vaḍḍha anubrūhaya".

That path walked by the seers
who have attained vision,
leading to the end of suffering:
Vaḍḍha, devote yourself to that!"

"Visāradāva bhaṇasi,
etamatthaṁ janetti me;
Maññāmi nūna māmike,

vanatho te na vijjati".

"Mother, you speak
from a place of self-confidence.
I suspect, mom,
there is no thicket to be found in you."

**"Ye keci vaḍḍha saṅkhārā,
hīnā ukkaṭṭhamajjhimā;
Aṇūpi aṇumattopi,
vanatho me na vijjati.**

"Vaḍḍha, not even the slightest thicket,
based on any conditions,
whether inferior, superior, or in the middle,
can be found in me.

**Sabbe me āsavā khīṇā,
appamattassa jhāyato;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ".**

I have destroyed all influences
by meditating with heedfulness.
I obtained the three knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha."

**"Uḷāraṁ vata me mātā,
patodaṁ samavassari;
Paramatthasañhitā gāthā,
yathāpi anukampikā.**

"Surely, my mother
spurred me with a noble goad,
with these compassionate verses,
of the highest benefit.

Tassāhaṁ vacanaṁ sutvā,

anusiṭṭhiṁ janettiyā;
Dhammasaṁvegamāpādiṁ,
yogakkhemassa pattiyā.

After I heard her words,
instructed by my mother,
I was met with a sense of urgency to practice the Dhamma
for the attainment of safety from bondage.

Sohaṁ padhānapahitatto,
rattindivamatandito;
Mātarā codito santo,
aphusiṁ santimuttamaṁ".

With a mind bent upon striving,
active by day and by night,
being exhorted by my mother,
I touched the highest peace."

…
…
Vaḍḍhamātā therī ….
The Elder Vaḍḍha's Mother

Navakanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Nines is finished.

The Chapter of theElevens

1. Kisāgotamītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Kisāgotamī

“Kalyāṇamittatā muninā,
lokaṁ ādissa vaṇṇitā;
Kalyāṇamitte bhajamāno,
api bālo paṇḍito assa.

“The sages praise virtuous friendship,
when they speak about the world.
By associating with virtuous friends,
even a fool may become wise.

Bhajitabbā sappurisā,
Paññā tathā vaḍḍhati bhajantānaṁ;
Bhajamāno sappurise,
Sabbehipi dukkhehi pamucceyya.

One should associate with good people,
as that is how wisdom grows.
If one associates with good people,
one would be freed from all suffering.

Dukkhañca vijāneyya,
Dukkhassa ca samudayaṁ nirodhaṁ;
Aṭṭhaṅgikañca maggaṁ,
Cattāripi ariyasaccāni”.

One would have knowledge of suffering,
the origin and cessation of suffering,
the Eightfold Path,
and also the Four Noble Truths.

“Dukkho itthibhāvo,
Akkhāto purisadammasārathinā;
Sapattikampi hi dukkhaṁ,

Appekaccā sakiṁ vijātāyo.

‘Being a woman is difficult,’
declared the trainer of those who can be trained.
Sharing the same husband is also suffering,
and for some even giving birth only once.

Galake api kantanti,
Sukhumāliniyo visāni khādanti;
Janamārakamajjhagatā,
Ubhopi byasanāni anubhonti”.

There are well-bred women who drink poisons,
and some who cut their husbands’ throat.
Having become murderers,
they all experience misfortune.

“Upavijaññā gacchantī,
addasāhaṁ patiṁ mataṁ;
Panthamhi vijāyitvāna,
appattāva sakaṁ gharaṁ.

I was on my way to give birth,
when my husband died.
I gave birth on the street,
far from my own house.

Dve puttā kālakatā,
Patī ca panthe mato kapaṇikāya;
Mātā pitā ca bhātā,
Ḍayhanti ca ekacitakāyaṁ”.

My two children have died,
and on the roadside lies my dead husband: I am miserable!
Mother, father, and brother,
all burnt on one funeral pyre.”

“Khīṇakulīne kapaṇe,

Anubhūtaṁ te dukhaṁ aparimāṇaṁ;
Assū ca te pavattaṁ,
Bahūni ca jātisahassāni.

“Poor you, without a family,
you have been through a lot of suffering,
shedding tears
for thousands of lives.”

Vasitā susānamajjhe,
Athopi khāditāni puttamaṁsāni;
Hatakulikā sabbagarahitā,
Matapatikā amatamadhigacchiṁ.

“I lived in the middle of the cemetery,
right by my child’s half-eaten flesh.
With family destroyed, blamed by all,
a widow, I found the deathless.

Bhāvito me maggo,
Ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko amatagāmī;
Nibbānaṁ sacchikataṁ,
Dhammādāsaṁ avekkhiṁhaṁ.

The way has been developed by me—
the Noble Eightfold Path leading to the deathless.
I realized Nirvana;
I gazed in the mirror of the Dhamma.

Ahamamhi kantasallā,
Ohitabhārā katañhi karaṇīyaṁ;
Kisā gotamī therī,
Vimuttacittā imaṁ bhaṇī”ti.

I have removed the thorn;
I put down the burden as ought to be done.
The Elder Kisā Gotamī

thus spoke with mind liberated."

…
…
Kisā gotamī therī ….
The Elder Kisā Gotamī

Ekādasakanipāto niṭṭhito.
Chapter of the Elevens is finished.

The Chapter of theTwelves

1. Uppalavaṇṇātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Uppalavaṇṇā

“Ubho mātā ca dhītā ca,
mayaṁ āsuṁ sapattiyo;
Tassā me ahu saṁvego,
abbhuto lomahaṁsano.

“We were mother and daughter,
but we also shared the same husband.
This terrifying and horrible situation
gave me a sense of urgency.

Dhiratthu kāmā asucī,
duggandhā bahukaṇṭakā;
Yattha mātā ca dhītā ca,
sabhariyā mayaṁ ahuṁ.

Damn impure sensual pleasures,
foul-smelling and painful,
where mother and daughter
share the same husband.

Kāmesvādīnavaṁ disvā,
nekkhammaṁ daṭṭhu khemato;
Sā pabbajjiṁ rājagahe,
agārasmānagāriyaṁ.

After seeing the drawbacks of sensual pleasures,
I saw the safety of renunciation.
I went forth in Rājagaha,
from the home life into homelessness.

Pubbenivāsaṁ jānāmi,
dibbacakkhu visodhitaṁ;
Cetopariccañāṇañca,

sotadhātu visodhitā.

I know my past lives,
I have purified my divine eye.
I am able to read the minds of others,
and I have purified the ear element.

Iddhīpi me sacchikatā,
patto me āsavakkhayo;
Chaḷabhiññā sacchikatā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ.

I have attained psychic powers,
and reached the destruction of the influences.
I have realized the six special knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.

Iddhiyā abhinimmitvā,
caturassaṁ rathaṁ ahaṁ;
Buddhassa pāde vanditvā,
lokanāthassa tādino".

I created with psychic powers
a four-horse chariot,
and went to pay homage at the feet of the Buddha,
the master of the world."

"Supupphitaggaṁ upagamma pādapaṁ,
Ekā tuvaṁ tiṭṭhasi sālamūle;
Na cāpi te dutiyo atthi koci,
Bāle na tvaṁ bhāyasi dhuttakānaṁ".

"You are alone,
at the roots of a flowering Sal tree.
Without anyone with you,
you fool, are you not afraid of rogues?"

"Sataṁ sahassānipi dhuttakānaṁ,

Samāgatā edisakā bhaveyyuṁ;
Lomaṁ na iñje napi sampavedhe,
Kiṁ me tuvaṁ māra karissaseko.

“Even if one hundred thousand rogues
were to band together like this,
not one hair would bristle from fear, nor would I waver.
So what could you do to me on your own, Māra?

Esā antaradhāyāmi,
kucchiṁ vā pavisāmi te;
Bhamukantare tiṭṭhāmi,
tiṭṭhantiṁ maṁ na dakkhasi.

I can disappear,
go inside your belly,
or stand in between your eyebrows,
where you cannot see me.

Cittamhi vasībhūtāhaṁ,
iddhipādā subhāvitā;
Chaḷabhiññā sacchikatā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ.

I have become the master of my own mind,
with the four bases of power well-cultivated;
I have realized the six special knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.

Sattisūlūpamā kāmā,
khandhāsaṁ adhikuṭṭanā;
Yaṁ tvaṁ ‘kāmaratiṁ’ brūsi,
‘āratī’ dāni sā mama.

Sensual pleasures are like the handle of an axe,
and one’s khandhas the executioner’s block.
The appealing sensual pleasures that you talk about

are no longer appealing to me.

Sabbattha vihatā nandī,
Tamokhandho padālito;
Evaṁ jānāhi pāpima,
Nihato tvamasi antakā”ti.

In this way all fixation is annihilated,
the mass of darkness destroyed.
Thus be aware, Wicked One,
Death—you are destroyed!”

…
…
Uppalavaṇṇā therī ….
The Elder Uppalavaṇṇā

Dvādasakanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Twelves is finished.

The Chapter of theSixteens

1. Puṇṇātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Puṇṇā

“Udahārī ahaṁ sīte,
sadā udakamotariṁ;
Ayyānaṁ daṇḍabhayabhītā,
vācādosabhayaṭṭitā.

“I am one who bathes in cold water,
always plunging into the water,
afraid of punishment by the masters,
terrified of angry words.”

Kassa brāhmaṇa tvaṁ bhīto,
sadā udakamotari;
Vedhamānehi gattehi,
sītaṁ vedayase bhusaṁ”.

“Why are you doing that, brahmin,
always plunging into the water frightened,
shivering,
and feeling very cold?”

“Jānantī vata maṁ bhoti,
puṇṇike paripucchasi;
Karontaṁ kusalaṁ kammaṁ,
rundhantaṁ katapāpakaṁ.

“Dear Puṇṇa, surely you know already,
why do you ask?
I am making good karma
to block past bad karma.

Yo ca vuḍḍho daharo vā,
pāpakammaṁ pakubbati;
Dakābhisecanā sopi,

pāpakammā pamuccati".

Whether one is young or old,
whomever does a bad deed
is liberated from their bad deed
through ritual bathing."

"Ko nu te idamakkhāsi,
ajānantassa ajānako;
Dakābhisecanā nāma,
pāpakammā pamuccati.

"Who told you this,
one ignorant person to another:
'through ritual bathing
one is liberated from bad deeds'?

Saggaṁ nūna gamissanti,
sabbe maṇḍūkakacchapā;
Nāgā ca susumārā ca,
ye cañña udake carā.

Does this mean that
all frogs, turtles,
sea-serpents, crocodiles,
and all the other marine beings will go to heaven?

Orabbhikā sūkarikā,
macchikā migabandhakā;
Corā ca vajjhaghātā ca,
ye cañña pāpakammino;
Dakābhisecanā tepi,
pāpakammā pamuccare.

Those who slaughter sheep and pigs,
fishermen, deer-hunters,
thieves, executioners,

and others doing bad deeds:
through ritual bathing,
they would be liberated from their bad deeds.

Sace imā nadiyo te,
pāpaṁ pubbe kataṁ vahuṁ;
Puññampimā vaheyyuṁ te,
tena tvaṁ paribāhiro.

If these rivers could carry away
the bad deeds you made in the past,
they would also carry away your merit,
because it would be outside of yourself.

Yassa brāhmaṇa tvaṁ bhīto,
sadā udakamotari;
Tameva brahme mā kāsi,
mā te sītaṁ chaviṁ hane".

Whatever you are frightened about, brahmin,
because of which you are always going into the water,
brahmin, just don't do that;
you do not need to let the cold hurt your skin."

"Kummaggapaṭipannaṁ maṁ,
ariyamaggaṁ samānayi;
Dakābhisecanā bhoti,
imaṁ sāṭaṁ dadāmi te".

"I was practicing the wrong path,
and you have led me to the Noble Path.
Dear Madam, I give you
this ritual bathing-cloth."

"Tuyheva sāṭako hotu,
nāhamicchāmi sāṭakaṁ;
Sace bhāyasi dukkhassa,

sace te dukkhamappiyaṁ.

“Let this cloth be yours,
I do not wish to have it.
If you are afraid of suffering,
if you dislike suffering,

Mākāsi pāpakaṁ kammaṁ,
āvi vā yadi vā raho;
Sace ca pāpakaṁ kammaṁ,
karissasi karosi vā.

do not do any bad deeds,
either publicly or privately.
If you do a bad deed,
or will do so in the future,

Na te dukkhā pamutyatthi,
upeccāpi palāyato;
Sace bhāyasi dukkhassa,
sace te dukkhamappiyaṁ.

you will not be liberated from your suffering,
it reaches you even if you try to run away from it.
If you are afraid of suffering,
if you dislike suffering,

Upehi saraṇaṁ buddhaṁ,
dhammaṁ saṅghañca tādinaṁ;
Samādiyāhi sīlāni,
taṁ te atthāya hehiti”.

go for refuge to the Buddha,
Dhamma, and Sangha.
Take up the moral practices,
for your own sake.”

“Upemi saraṇaṁ buddhaṁ,

dhammaṁ saṅghañca tādinaṁ;
Samādiyāmi sīlāni,
taṁ me atthāya hehiti.

"I go for refuge to the Buddha,
Dhamma, and Sangha.
I take up the moral practices,
for my own sake.

Brahmabandhu pure āsiṁ,
ajjamhi saccabrāhmaṇo;
Tevijjo vedasampanno,
sottiyo camhi nhātako"ti.

Before I was a kinsman of Brahmā,
today I am a real brahmin.
Possessing the three knowledges and higher insight,
I am one who has bathed, and has attained the highest knowledge."

… Puṇṇā therī ….
The Elder Puṇṇā

Soḷasakanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Sixteens is finished.

The Chapter of theTwenties

1. Ambapālītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Ambapālī

“Kāḷakā bhamaravaṇṇasādisā,
Vellitaggā mama muddhajā ahuṁ;
Te jarāya sāṇavākasādisā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

“Curly hair, black like the color of bees,
sprang from this head of mine.
Because of old age it is now like hemp-bark—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

Vāsitova surabhī karaṇḍako,
Pupphapūra mama uttamaṅgajo;
Taṁ jarāyatha salomagandhikaṁ,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

A fragrance like a sweet-scented chest full of flowers,
sprang from this head of mine.
Because of old age now it just smells like fur—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

Kānanaṁva sahitaṁ suropitaṁ,
Kocchasūcivicitaggasobhitaṁ;
Taṁ jarāya viralaṁ tahiṁ tahiṁ,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

Hair growing thick like a forest grove,
made resplendent, and gathered at the top with comb and hairpins.
Because of old age, it is now thinning here and there—
the truth-speaker’s words are never wrong.

Kaṇhakhandhakasuvaṇṇamaṇḍitaṁ,
Sobhate suveṇīhilaṅkataṁ;
Taṁ jarāya khalitaṁ siraṁ kataṁ,

Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

Shining hair, adorned with plaits of black and gold,
arranged in beautiful braids.
Because of old age my head has gone bald—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Cittakārasukatāva lekhikā,
Sobhare su bhamukā pure mama;
Tā jarāya valibhippalambitā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

My eyebrows were such a splendor,
so well done, as if drawn by a painter.
Because of old age they are sagging and wrinkly—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Bhassarā surucirā yathā maṇī,
Nettahesumabhinīlamāyatā;
Te jarāyabhihatā na sobhare,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

My large eyes were the best shade of blue,
as radiant and splendid as gemstones.
Because of old age, they shine no more—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Saṇhatuṅgasadisī ca nāsikā,
Sobhate su abhiyobbanaṁ pati;
Sā jarāya upakūlitā viya,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

Smooth prominent incomparable nose,
shining at the peak of youth—
Because of old age it has withered,
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Kaṅkaṇaṁva sukataṁ suniṭṭhitaṁ,

Sobhare su mama kaṇṇapāḷiyo;
Tā jarāya valibhippalambitā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

My earlobes were such a splendor,
like bracelets well made from start to finish.
Because of old age they are sagging and wrinkly—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Pattalīmakulavaṇṇasādisā,
Sobhare su dantā pure mama;
Te jarāya khaṇḍitā cāsitā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

The color of a jasmine bud,
my teeth were so splendid.
Because of old age they are broken and blackened—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Kānanamhi vanasaṇḍacārinī,
Kokilāva madhuraṁ nikūjihaṁ;
Taṁ jarāya khalitaṁ tahiṁ tahiṁ,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

I had a sweet hum like a cuckoo,
chirping in the forests and jungles.
Because of old age it falters at times—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Saṇhakamburiva suppamajjitā,
Sobhate su gīvā pure mama;
Sā jarāya bhaggā vināmitā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

My neck looked beautiful in the past,
as smooth as a well polished conch-shell.
Because of old age it is twisted and broken—

the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Vaṭṭapalighasadisopamā ubho,
Sobhare su bāhā pure mama;
Tā jarāya yatha pāṭalibbalitā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anañña thā.

My arms were of such splendor,
both similar to round crossbars.
Because of old age they are now like withered branches—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Saṇhamuddikasuvaṇṇamaṇḍitā,
Sobhare su hatthā pure mama;
Te jarāya yathā mūlamūlikā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anañña thā.

My hands were of such splendor,
smooth and adorned with gold rings.
Because of old age they are now like gnarled roots—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Pīnavaṭṭasahituggatā ubho,
Sobhare su thanakā pure mama;
Thevikīva lambanti nodakā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anañña thā.

My little breasts were of such splendor,
plump, round, close together, and perky.
Like drops of water they now droop—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Kañcanassa phalakaṁva sammaṭṭhaṁ,
Sobhate su kāyo pure mama;
So valīhi sukhumāhi otato,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anañña thā.

My body was of such splendor,
smooth like a golden panel.
Now it's covered with fine wrinkles—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Nāgabhogasadisopamā ubho,
Sobhare su ūrū pure mama;
Te jarāya yathā veḷunāḷiyo,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

My thighs were of such splendor,
both like the torso of a snake.
Because of old age they are now like stalks of bamboo—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Saṇhanūpurasuvaṇṇamaṇḍitā,
Sobhare su jaṅghā pure mama;
Tā jarāya tiladaṇḍakāriva,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

My calves were of such splendor,
adorned with exquisite gold anklets.
Because of old age they are now like sesame twigs—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Tūlapuṇṇasadisopamā ubho,
Sobhare su pādā pure mama;
Te jarāya phuṭitā valīmatā,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā.

My feet were of such splendor,
as soft as tufts of cotton.
Because of old age they are wrinkled and cracked—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong.

Ediso ahu ayaṁ samussayo,
Jajjaro bahudukkhānamālayo;

Sopalepapatito jarāgharo,
Saccavādivacanaṁ anaññathā".

Such was this body,
now decrepit, an abode of much suffering,
a house of decrepitude fallen into disrepair—
the truth-speaker's words are never wrong."

… Ambapālī therī ….
The Elder Ambapālī

2. Rohinītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Rohinī

“‘Samaṇā’ti bhoti supi,
‘samaṇā’ti pabujjhasi;
Samaṇāneva kittesi,
samaṇī nūna bhavissasi.

“You fall asleep talking about ‘contemplatives’,
you wake up talking about ‘contemplatives’,
you only praise contemplatives,
surely you will become a contemplative.

Vipulaṁ annañca pānañca,
samaṇānaṁ paveccasi;
Rohinī dāni pucchāmi,
kena te samaṇā piyā.

Abundant food and drink
you offer to contemplatives.
Rohinī, now I ask:
what is so dear to you about contemplatives?

Akammakāmā alasā,
paradattūpajīvino;
Āsaṁsukā sādukāmā,
kena te samaṇā piyā”.

They’re idle and lazy,
living on what is given by others,
longing for sweet sensual pleasures,
what is so dear to you about contemplatives?”

“Cirassaṁ vata maṁ tāta,
samaṇānaṁ paripucchasi;
Tesaṁ te kittayissāmi,

paññāsīlaparakkamaṁ.

“For a very long time indeed, father,
you have asked me about contemplatives.
For you, I will speak in praise of their
wisdom, morality, and commitment.

Kammakāmā analasā,
kammaseṭṭhassa kārakā;
Rāgaṁ dosaṁ pajahanti,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

Industrious, not lazy,
doers of the best deeds,
they give up passion and aversion—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Tīṇi pāpassa mūlāni,
dhunanti sucikārino;
Sabbaṁ pāpaṁ pahīnesaṁ,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

The three roots of evil
they shake off, the ones whose actions are pure,
who have abandoned all evil—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Kāyakammaṁ suci nesaṁ,
vacīkammañca tādisaṁ;
Manokammaṁ suci nesaṁ,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

They do pure bodily actions,
as well as verbal actions,
and pure mental actions—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Vimalā saṅkhamuttāva,

suddhā santarabāhirā;
Puṇṇā sukkāna dhammānaṁ,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

Spotless as a pearl,
they are pure internally and externally,
and full of bright qualities—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Bahussutā dhammadharā,
ariyā dhammajīvino;
Atthaṁ dhammañca desenti,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

Very learned, knowing the Dhamma by heart,
Noble Ones, living a life of Dhamma,
they expound the meaning of the Dhamma—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Bahussutā dhammadharā,
ariyā dhammajīvino;
Ekaggacittā satimanto,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

Very learned, knowing the Dhamma by heart,
Noble Ones, living a life of Dhamma,
mindful, with one-pointed minds—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Dūraṅgamā satimanto,
mantabhāṇī anuddhatā;
Dukkhassantaṁ pajānanti,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

Going afar, mindful,
giving counsel without conceit,
they clearly know the end of suffering—

because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Yasmā gāmā pakkamanti,
na vilokenti kiñcanaṁ;
Anapekkhāva gacchanti,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

From whichever village they set out,
they never look back,
they wander without longing—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Na te saṁ koṭṭhe openti,
na kumbhiṁ na khaḷopiyaṁ;
Pariniṭṭhitamesānā,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

They do not deposit things in storerooms,
nor do they have pots and pans,
seeking complete perfection—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Na te hiraññaṁ gaṇhanti,
na suvaṇṇaṁ na rūpiyaṁ;
Paccuppannena yāpenti,
tena me samaṇā piyā.

They do not take up gold,
silver or money,
they are nourished by the present moment—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.

Nānākulā pabbajitā,
nānājanapadehi ca;
Aññamaññaṁ piyāyanti,
tena me samaṇā piyā".

Monastics from different clans,
and from different provinces,
they hold each other dear—
because of this, contemplatives are dear to me.”

“Atthāya vata no bhoti,
kule jātāsi rohinī;
Saddhā buddhe ca dhamme ca,
saṅghe ca tibbagāravā.

“It surely was for our benefit
that you were born in this clan, Rohinī.
Very devout, and with faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma,
and the Sangha.

Tuvaṁ hetaṁ pajānāsi,
puññakkhettaṁ anuttaraṁ;
Amhampi ete samaṇā,
paṭigaṇhanti dakkhiṇaṁ.

You clearly know this
incomparable field of merit.
These contemplatives
will receive donations from us as well.

Patiṭṭhito hettha yañño,
vipulo no bhavissati”;
“Sace bhāyasi dukkhassa,
sace te dukkhamappiyaṁ.

Charity will be established here by us,
and it will be abundant.”
“If you are afraid of suffering,
if you dislike suffering,

Upehi saraṇaṁ buddhaṁ,
dhammaṁ saṅghañca tādinaṁ;

Samādiyāhi sīlāni,
taṁ te atthāya hehiti".

go for refuge to the Buddha,
Dhamma, and Sangha.
Take up the moral practices,
for your own sake."

"Upemi saraṇaṁ buddhaṁ,
dhammaṁ saṅghañca tādinaṁ;
Samādiyāmi sīlāni,
taṁ me atthāya hehiti.

"I go for refuge to the Buddha,
Dhamma, and Sangha.
Having taken up the moral practices,
it will be for my sake."

Brahmabandhu pure āsiṁ,
so idānimhi brāhmaṇo;
Tevijjo sottiyo camhi,
vedagū camhi nhātako".

"Before I was a kinsman of Brahmā,
now I am a brahmin.
Possessing the three knowledges, I am one who has attained the highest knowledge,
I am one who has bathed."

… Rohinī therī ….
The Elder Rohinī

3. Cāpātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Cāpā

“Laṭṭhihattho pure āsi,
so dāni migaluddako;
Āsāya palipā ghorā,
nāsakkhi pārametave.

“In the past I handled a staff,
now I am a deer hunter.
Desire held me back from passing over
the terrible marsh to the far shore.

Sumattaṁ maṁ maññamānā,
cāpā puttamatosayi;
Cāpāya bandhanaṁ chetvā,
pabbajissaṁ punopahaṁ”.

Cāpā is lying there,
sure that I am captivated by our child.
I need to cut my bond with Cāpā
and go forth again.

“Mā me kujjhi mahāvīra,
mā me kujjhi mahāmuni;
Na hi kodhaparetassa,
suddhi atthi kuto tapo”.

The Great Hero will not be upset with me!
The Great Sage will not be upset with me!
Because how could a pure one with spiritual power
be overcome by anger?

“Pakkamissañca nāḷāto,
kodha nāḷāya vacchati;
Bandhantī itthirūpena,

samaṇe dhammajīvino”.

I will escape from her claws!
Who would want to live trapped by claws,
that in the shape of a female capture
contemplatives who are living a life of Dhamma?”

“Ehi kāḷa nivattassu,
bhuñja kāme yathā pure;
Ahañca te vasīkatā,
ye ca me santi ñātakā”.

“Come back here, Kāḷa,
enjoy sensual pleasures like you did in the past.
My family and I
are under your power.”

“Etto cāpe catubbhāgaṁ,
yathā bhāsasi tvañca me;
Tayi rattassa posassa,
uḷāraṁ vata taṁ siyā”.

“Oh Cāpā, even a fraction
of what you say to me,
for an infatuated man,
would be wonderful indeed.”

“Kāḷaṅginiṁva takkāriṁ,
pupphitaṁ girimuddhani;
Phullaṁ dālimalaṭṭhiṁva,
antodīpeva pāṭaliṁ.

“Kālā, I am like an acacia tree
flowering at the peak of a mountain,
a blossoming pomegranate,
a trumpet flower tree on an island.

Haricandanalittaṅgiṁ,

kāsikuttamadhāriniṁ;
Taṁ maṁ rūpavatiṁ santiṁ,
kassa ohāya gacchasi".

My limbs are anointed in yellow sandalwood,
and I wear the best fabrics from Kāsi.
How can you go and leave me behind,
when I am so beautiful?"

"Sākuntikova sakuṇiṁ,
yathā bandhitumicchati;
Āharimena rūpena,
na maṁ tvaṁ bādhayissasi".

"You are like a fowler
who longs to capture a bird,
but even with your attractive body
you will not capture me."

"Imañca me puttaphalaṁ,
kāḷa uppāditaṁ tayā;
Taṁ maṁ puttavatiṁ santiṁ,
kassa ohāya gacchasi".

"And this child of mine,
Kāḷā, has come into existence because of you.
How can you go and abandon me,
when I have this child?"

"Jahanti putte sappaññā,
tato ñātī tato dhanaṁ;
Pabbajanti mahāvīrā,
nāgo chetvāva bandhanaṁ".

"The wise leave children,
relatives, and wealth.
Great heroes go forth,

like a Nāga who has cut all bonds."

"Idāni te imaṁ puttaṁ,
Daṇḍena churikāya vā;
Bhūmiyaṁ vā nisumbhissaṁ,
Puttasokā na gacchasi".

"Now this is your child,
who, with a knife or a stick,
I will knock down on the ground,
struck by grief after the loss of your child you will not go."

"Sace puttaṁ siṅgālānaṁ,
kukkurānaṁ padāhisi;
Na maṁ puttakatte jammi,
punarāvattayissasi".

"Even if you fed our child
to dogs and jackals,
not even for my own child, you wretch,
would I ever come back."

"Handa kho dāni bhaddante,
kuhiṁ kāḷa gamissasi;
Katamaṁ gāmanigamaṁ,
nagaraṁ rājadhāniyo".

"Alright now, venerable sir,
then where will you go, Kāḷa?
To what town or village,
to what borough or royal city?"

"Ahumha pubbe gaṇino,
Assamaṇā samaṇamānino;
Gāmena gāmaṁ vicarimha,
Nagare rājadhāniyo.

“In the past we had a following,
we thought we were contemplatives, but we actually were not.
We wandered from village to village,
from towns to royal cities.

Eso hi bhagavā buddho,
nadiṁ nerañjaraṁ pati;
Sabbadukkhappahānāya,
dhammaṁ deseti pāṇinaṁ;
Tassāhaṁ santikaṁ gacchaṁ,
so me satthā bhavissati”.

But there is the Bhagavant, the Buddha,
by the River Nerañjara;
for the removal of all suffering,
he preaches the Dhamma to sentient beings.
I will go to him,
and he will become my Teacher.”

“Vandanaṁ dāni vajjāsi,
lokanāthaṁ anuttaraṁ;
Padakkhiṇañca katvāna,
ādiseyyāsi dakkhiṇaṁ”.

“Now bring homage
to the protector of the world, the unsurpassable one.
Keeping him to your right,
you will dedicate a gift.”

“Etaṁ kho labbhamamhehi,
yathā bhāsasi tvañca me;
Vandanaṁ dāni te vajjaṁ,
lokanāthaṁ anuttaraṁ;
Padakkhiṇañca katvāna,
ādisissāmi dakkhiṇaṁ”.

“That indeed is proper for me,

just as you say to me,
to bring your homage
to the protector of the world, the unsurpassable one.
Keeping him to my right,
I will dedicate a gift."

Tato ca kāḷo pakkāmi,
nadiṁ nerañjaraṁ pati;
So addasāsi sambuddhaṁ,
desentaṁ amataṁ padaṁ.

From there, Kāḷa went on
to the River Nerañjara,
he saw the Self-Enlightened One,
expounding the path to the deathless.

Dukkhaṁ dukkhasamuppādaṁ,
dukkhassa ca atikkamaṁ;
Ariyaṁ caṭṭhaṅgikaṁ maggaṁ,
dukkhūpasamagāminaṁ.

Suffering, the origin of suffering,
and the overcoming of suffering.
and the Noble Eightfold Path
leading to the appeasement of suffering.

Tassa pādāni vanditvā,
Katvāna naṁ padakkhiṇaṁ;
Cāpāya ādisitvāna,
Pabbajiṁ anagāriyaṁ;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
Kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ.

He paid homage at his feet,
and keeping him to his right,
announced Cāpā's dedication
and went forth into homelessness.

He obtained the three knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.

… Cāpā therī ….
The Elder Cāpā

4. Sundarītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sundarī

“Petāni bhoti puttāni,
khādamānā tuvaṁ pure;
Tuvaṁ divā ca ratto ca,
atīva paritappasi.

“In the past your dead children
were devoured by scavengers.
Day and night,
you were overwhelmed by torment.

Sājja sabbāni khāditvā,
sataputtāni brāhmaṇī;
Vāseṭṭhi kena vaṇṇena,
na bāḷhaṁ paritappasi”.

All of your seven children
have been devoured.
Brahmin Vāseṭṭhi, how come you
don’t look so strongly tormented now?”

“Bahūni puttasatāni,
ñātisaṅghasatāni ca;
Khāditāni atītaṁse,
mama tuyhañca brāhmaṇa.

“Brahmin, both you and I,
have had hundreds of children
and hundreds of relatives devoured
at some point in the past.

Sāhaṁ nissaraṇaṁ ñatvā,
jātiyā maraṇassa ca;
Na socāmi na rodāmi,

na cāpi paritappayiṁ".

I have understood the escape
from birth and death
so I do not sorrow, I do not weep,
and I am not tormented."

"Abbhutaṁ vata vāseṭṭhi,
vācaṁ bhāsasi edisiṁ;
Kassa tvaṁ dhammamaññāya,
giraṁ bhāsasi edisiṁ".

"It certainly is wonderful, Vāseṭṭhi,
that you make such a statement!
Whose Dhamma have you learned,
that you speak in this way?"

"Esa brāhmaṇa sambuddho,
nagaraṁ mithilaṁ pati;
Sabbadukkhappahānāya,
dhammaṁ desesi pāṇinaṁ.

"There is, brahmin, the Self-Enlightened one,
in the town of Mithilā,
who teaches the Dhamma to sentient beings
so they can remove all suffering.

Tassa brahme arahato,
dhammaṁ sutvā nirūpadhiṁ;
Tattha viññātasaddhammā,
puttasokaṁ byapānudiṁ".

Brahmin, once I heard the teaching
of non-acquisition from that Arahant,
I immediately understood the true Dhamma,
and dispelled the grief I had for my lost children."

"So ahampi gamissāmi,

nagaraṁ mithilaṁ pati;
Appeva maṁ so bhagavā,
sabbadukkhā pamocaye".

"I too will go
to the town of Mithilā.
Perhaps the Bhagavant
can set me free of all suffering."

Addasa brāhmaṇo buddhaṁ,
vippamuttaṁ nirūpadhiṁ;
Svassa dhammamadesesi,
muni dukkhassa pāragū.

The brahmin saw the Buddha,
released, free from acquisitions.
The Sage gone beyond suffering
taught him the Dhamma:

Dukkhaṁ dukkhasamuppādaṁ,
dukkhassa ca atikkamaṁ;
Ariyaṁ caṭṭhaṅgikaṁ maggaṁ,
dukkhūpasamagāminaṁ.

suffering, the origin of suffering,
the overcoming of suffering,
and the Noble eightfold path
leading to the appeasement of suffering.

Tattha viññātasaddhammo,
pabbajjaṁ samarocayi;
Sujāto tīhi rattīhi,
tisso vijjā aphassayi.

He immediately understood the true Dhamma,
and was happy to go forth.
On the third night,

Sujāta attained the three knowledges.

“Ehi sārathi gacchāhi,
rathaṁ niyyādayāhimaṁ;
Ārogyaṁ brāhmaṇiṁ vajja,
‘pabbaji dāni brāhmaṇo;
Sujāto tīhi rattīhi,
tisso vijjā aphassayi’”.

“Come here, charioteer,
take this chariot back,
wish my brahmin lady freedom from disease, and tell her:
‘The brahmin has now gone forth.
On the third night,
Sujāta attained the three knowledges.’”

Tato ca rathamādāya,
sahassañcāpi sārathi;
Ārogyaṁ brāhmaṇiṁvoca,
“pabbaji dāni brāhmaṇo;
Sujāto tīhi rattīhi,
tisso vijjā aphassayi”.

So the charioteer, took the chariot
and a thousand,
and wishing the brahmin lady freedom from disease, he said:
“The brahmin has now gone forth.
On the third night,
Sujāta attained the three knowledges.”

“Etañcāhaṁ assarathaṁ,
sahassañcāpi sārathi;
Tevijjaṁ brāhmaṇaṁ sutvā,
puṇṇapattaṁ dadāmi te”.

“Charioteer, I give you this horse and carriage,
as well as the thousand

and a full bowl,
since I hear that the brahmin possesses the three knowledges."

"Tuyheva hotvassaratho,
sahassañcāpi brāhmaṇi;
Ahampi pabbajissāmi,
varapaññassa santike".

"Take this horse and carriage,
and the thousand, brahmin lady,
I too will go forth,
near this excellent and wise one."

"Hatthī gavassaṁ maṇikuṇḍalañca,
Phītañcimaṁ gahavibhavaṁ pahāya;
Pitā pabbajito tuyhaṁ,
Bhuñja bhogāni sundarī;
Tuvaṁ dāyādikā kule".

"An elephant, an ox, and a jeweled earring;
after giving up such opulent householder wealth,
your father went forth.
Sundarī, enjoy these possessions,
you are the heir in the family."

"Hatthī gavassaṁ maṇikuṇḍalañca,
Rammaṁ cimaṁ gahavibhavaṁ pahāya;
Pitā pabbajito mayhaṁ,
Puttasokena aṭṭito;
Ahampi pabbajissāmi,
Bhātusokena aṭṭitā".

"An elephant, an ox, and a jeweled earring,
after giving up such charming householder wealth,
my father went forth,
struck by grief after losing his child.
I too will go forth,

struck by grief after losing my brother."

"So te ijjhatu saṅkappo,
yaṁ tvaṁ patthesi sundarī;
Uttiṭṭhapiṇḍo uñcho ca,
paṁsukūlañca cīvaraṁ;
Etāni abhisambhontī,
paraloke anāsavā".

"May your intention and aspiration
Sundarī, come to fruition.
Lumps of leftover food for sustenance,
and robes made from discarded rags:
these are acquired
free from influences in the world to come."

"Sikkhamānāya me ayye,
dibbacakkhu visodhitaṁ;
Pubbenivāsaṁ jānāmi,
yattha me vusitaṁ pure.

"Because of the training, Ayya,
I have purified my divine eye.
I know my past lives,
where I dwelt previously.

Tuvaṁ nissāya kalyāṇi,
theri saṅghassa sobhane;
Tisso vijjā anuppattā,
kataṁ buddhassa sāsanaṁ.

On account of your support, beautiful one,
Elder Sobhanā who beautifies the Sangha,
I obtained the three knowledges,
and completed the teaching of the Buddha.

Anujānāhi me ayye,

icche sāvatthi gantave;
Sīhanādaṁ nadissāmi,
buddhaseṭṭhassa santike".

Allow me, Ayya,
to go to Sāvatthī where I desire to be,
I will roar my lion's roar,
in the presence of the foremost Buddha."

"Passa sundari satthāraṁ,
hemavaṇṇaṁ harittacaṁ;
Adantānaṁ dametāraṁ,
sambuddhamakutobhayaṁ".

"Sundarī, see the Teacher,
with golden colored skin,
tamer of the untamed,
the self-enlightened one, fearless everywhere."

"Passa sundarimāyantiṁ,
vippamuttaṁ nirūpadhiṁ;
Vītarāgaṁ visaṁyuttaṁ,
katakiccamanāsavaṁ.

"See Sundarī coming,
released, free from acquisitions,
free from passion, unbound,
one who has done what was to be done, free from influences."

Bārāṇasito nikkhamma,
tava santikamāgatā;
Sāvikā te mahāvīra,
pāde vandati sundarī.

"Having left Bārāṇasī,
coming near you,
Great Hero, your female disciple,

Sundarī, pays homage at your feet.

Tuvaṁ buddho tuvaṁ satthā,
tuyhaṁ dhītāmhi brāhmaṇa;
Orasā mukhato jātā,
katakiccā anāsavā".

You are the Buddha, you are the Teacher,
I am your daughter, brahmin!
Legitimate, born from your mouth,
one who has done what was to be done, free from influences."

"Tassā te svāgataṁ bhadde,
tato te adurāgataṁ;
Evañhi dantā āyanti,
satthu pādāni vandikā;
Vītarāgā visaṁyuttā,
katakiccā anāsavā".

"You are welcome here, lucky one,
you are indeed welcome here.
In this way the tamed ones come,
paying homage at the Teacher's feet.
Free from passion, unbound,
they have done what was to be done, free from influences."

… Sundarī therī ….
The Elder Sundarī

5. Subhākammāradhītutherīgāthā:
Subhā, the Daughter of a Blacksmith

“Daharāhaṁ suddhavasanā,
yaṁ pure dhammamassuṇiṁ;
Tassā me appamattāya,
saccābhisamayo ahu.

“I was young and pure
when I heard the Dhamma.
I understood the truth
through heedfulness,

Tatohaṁ sabbakāmesu,
bhusaṁ aratimajjhagaṁ;
Sakkāyasmiṁ bhayaṁ disvā,
nekkhammameva pīhaye.

and then all sensual pleasures
stopped being so appealing.
I saw the danger in self-identity
and longed for renunciation.

Hitvānahaṁ ñātigaṇaṁ,
dāsakammakarāni ca;
Gāmakhettāni phītāni,
ramaṇīye pamodite.

I left behind relatives,
workers and servants,
and prosperous village fields,
pleasing and delightful.

Pahāyahaṁ pabbajitā,
sāpateyyamanappakaṁ;
Evaṁ saddhāya nikkhamma,

saddhamme suppavedite.

I gave up much wealth
for the sake of going forth,
Now that I have left the household life
out of faith in the well-spoken true Dhamma,

Netaṁ assa patirūpaṁ,
Ākiñcaññañhi patthaye;
Yo jātarūpaṁ rajataṁ,
Chaḍḍetvā punarāgame.

it wouldn't be proper
for one who aspires to nothingness,
to revert to gold and silver
after casting them away.

Rajataṁ jātarūpaṁ vā,
na bodhāya na santiyā;
Netaṁ samaṇasāruppaṁ,
na etaṁ ariyaddhanaṁ.

Silver or gold
do not bring enlightenment nor peace.
They are not proper for a contemplative,
this isn't noble wealth.

Lobhanaṁ madanañcetaṁ,
mohanaṁ rajavaḍḍhanaṁ;
Sāsaṅkaṁ bahuāyāsaṁ,
natthi cettha dhuvaṁ ṭhiti.

It's just greed and intoxication,
delusion and increase of impurity.
It is unreliable, troublesome,
and short-lived.

Ettha rattā pamattā ca,

saṅkiliṭṭhamanā narā;
Aññamaññena byāruddhā,
puthu kubbanti medhagaṁ.

Human beings with defiled minds pursue it.
Heedless and lustful,
they get into numerous quarrels,
pitting themselves against each other.

Vadho bandho parikleso,
jāni sokapariddavo;
Kāmesu adhipannānaṁ,
dissate byasanaṁ bahuṁ.

One can see those entangled in sensual pleasures
afflicted with much misfortune:
ruin, imprisonment, hardship,
loss, grief, and lamentation.

Taṁ maṁ ñātī amittāva,
kiṁ vo kāmesu yuñjatha;
Jānātha maṁ pabbajitaṁ,
kāmesu bhayadassiniṁ.

Treacherous relatives,
why do you try to trap me in sensual pleasures?
You know I have gone forth
after seeing the danger in sensual pleasures.

Na hiraññasuvaṇṇena,
parikkhīyanti āsavā;
Amittā vadhakā kāmā,
sapattā sallabandhanā.

Neither gold nor money
will eliminate the influences of mind.
Sensual pleasures are murderous enemies,

foes, darts, fetters.

Taṁ maṁ ñātī amittāva,
kiṁ vo kāmesu yuñjatha;
Jānātha maṁ pabbajitaṁ,
muṇḍaṁ saṅghāṭipārutaṁ.

Treacherous relatives,
why do you try to trap me in sensual pleasures?
You know I have gone forth
with a shaven head, wrapped in the outer robe.

Uttiṭṭhapiṇḍo uñcho ca,
paṁsukūlañca cīvaraṁ;
Etaṁ kho mama sāruppaṁ,
anagārūpanissayo.

Collecting lumps of leftover food,
and robes made from discarded rags:
these are the supports for the homeless life,
this is what is proper for me.

Vantā mahesīhi kāmā,
ye dibbā ye ca mānusā;
Khemaṭṭhāne vimuttā te,
pattā te acalaṁ sukhaṁ.

The great sages have spewed out sensual pleasures,
both divine and human.
They are in a safe place, they are liberated,
they have reached unshakable happiness.

Māhaṁ kāmehi saṅgacchiṁ,
yesu tāṇaṁ na vijjati;
Amittā vadhakā kāmā,
aggikkhandhūpamā dukhā.

I should not get involved with sensual pleasures,
where safety is not found.
Sensual pleasures are deadly enemies,
they are like a great mass of fire, they are suffering.

Paripantho esa bhayo,
savighāto sakaṇṭako;
Gedho suvisamo ceso,
mahanto mohanāmukho.

Greed is hazardous, frightful,
pestering, troublesome.
It is the opposite of peace,
and the way into much delusion.

Upasaggo bhīmarūpo,
kāmā sappasirūpamā;
Ye bālā abhinandanti,
andhabhūtā puthujjanā.

Sensual pleasures are like the head of a snake,
dangerous and dire.
Foolish blind worldlings
delight in them—

Kāmapaṅkena sattā hi,
bahū loke aviddasū;
Pariyantaṁ na jānanti,
jātiyā maraṇassa ca.

indeed there are many foolish beings in the world,
trapped in the mud of sensual pleasures,
who do not know the end
of birth and death.

Duggatigamanaṁ maggaṁ,
manussā kāmahetukaṁ;

Bahuṁ ve paṭipajjanti,
attano rogamāvahaṁ.

Because of sensual pleasures
humans are on the path that leads to a bad destination.
Many decide to follow it,
bringing illness to themselves,

Evaṁ amittajananā,
tāpanā saṅkilesikā;
Lokāmisā bandhanīyā,
kāmā maraṇabandhanā.

by producing enmity,
torment, and complete defilement.
Sensual pleasures are entrapping,
the world's bait that binds us to death.

Ummādanā ullapanā,
kāmā cittappamaddino;
Sattānaṁ saṅkilesāya,
khippaṁ mārena oḍḍitaṁ.

Maddening, enticing,
sensual pleasures crush the mind.
They are a trap set by Māra
for the defilement of sentient beings.

Anantādīnavā kāmā,
bahudukkhā mahāvisā;
Appassādā raṇakarā,
sukkapakkhavisosanā.

Sensual pleasures have endless drawbacks,
cause much suffering, and are highly poisonous.
They bring little enjoyment, they produce conflict,
causing one's bright wholesome traits to wither away.

Sāhaṁ etādisaṁ katvā,
byasanaṁ kāmahetukaṁ;
Na taṁ paccāgamissāmi,
nibbānābhiratā sadā.

I will not go back
to sensual pleasures,
which have caused me so much misery—
now I always enjoy Nirvana.

Raṇaṁ karitvā kāmānaṁ,
sītibhāvābhikaṅkhinī;
Appamattā vihassāmi,
sabbasaṁyojanakkhaye.

When I was battling with sensual pleasures,
I longed for a state of coolness—
now I dwell heedful
in the destruction of all fetters.

Asokaṁ virajaṁ khemaṁ,
ariyaṭṭhaṅgikaṁ ujuṁ;
Taṁ maggaṁ anugacchāmi,
yena tiṇṇā mahesino".

Free from sorrow, stainless, safe:
I follow the upright
Noble Eightfold Path,
the one because of which the Great Sage crossed over."

"Imaṁ passatha dhammaṭṭhaṁ,
subhaṁ kammāradhītaraṁ;
Anejaṁ upasampajja,
rukkhamūlamhi jhāyati.

"You see this person established in Dhamma,
Subhā, the daughter of a blacksmith.

Having become free from passion,
she meditates at the root of a tree.

Ajjaṭṭhamī pabbajitā,
saddhā saddhammasobhanā;
Vinītuppalavaṇṇāya,
tevijjā maccuhāyinī.

Today is the eighth day since her going forth,
faith shining in the true Dhamma.
Trained by Uppalavaṇṇā,
possessing the three knowledges, leaving behind death.

Sāyaṁ bhujissā anaṇā,
bhikkhunī bhāvitindriyā;
Sabbayogavisaṁyuttā,
katakiccā anāsavā".

A free person with no debt,
a bhikkhunī with well-developed spiritual powers,
with all bonds unbound,
she is one who has done what was to be done, and is free from influences."

Taṁ sakko devasaṅghena,
upasaṅkamma iddhiyā;
Namassati bhūtapati,
subhaṁ kammāradhītaranti.

Then Sakka, using psychic powers,
approached her with an assembly of Devas,
and the lord of beings paid homage to
Subhā, the daughter of a blacksmith.

…
Subhā kammāradhītā therī ….
The Elder Subhā, daughter of a blacksmith.

Vīsatinipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Twenties is finished.

The Chapter of theThirties

1. Subhājīvakambavanikātherīgāthā:

Verses of the Elder Subhā of Jīvaka's Mango Grove

Jīvakambavanaṁ rammaṁ,
Gacchantiṁ bhikkhuniṁ subhaṁ;
Dhuttako sannivāresi,
Tamenaṁ abravī subhā.

Bhikkhunī Subhā was going
to Jīvaka's charming mango grove.
A rogue obstructed her,
so Subhā said this to him:

"Kiṁ te aparādhitaṁ mayā,
Yaṁ maṁ ovariyāna tiṭṭhasi;
Na hi pabbajitāya āvuso,
Puriso samphusanāya kappati.

"Have I done something to offend you,
that you stand there holding me back?
Because it is not proper, friend,
for a layperson to touch one who has gone forth.

Garuke mama satthusāsane,
Yā sikkhā sugatena desitā;
Parisuddhapadaṁ anaṅgaṇaṁ,
Kiṁ maṁ ovariyāna tiṭṭhasi.

This is serious, according to my teacher's instructions.
The One Faring Well has made the trainings clear.
I am on the path of complete purity, I am flawless,
why do you stand there holding me back?

Āvilacitto anāvilaṁ,
Sarajo vītarajaṁ anaṅgaṇaṁ;
Sabbattha vimuttamānasaṁ,

Kiṁ maṁ ovariyāna tiṭṭhasi”.

Your mind is turbulent, mine is not,
your mind is dirty, mine is not.
My mind is flawless and liberated in every way,
why do you stand there holding me back?”

“Daharā ca apāpikā casi,
Kiṁ te pabbajjā karissati;
Nikkhipa kāsāyacīvaraṁ,
Ehi ramāma supupphite vane.

“Young and innocent girl,
what can going forth do for you?
Put down that ochre robe,
come enjoy yourself in this flowering forest.

Madhurañca pavanti sabbaso,
Kusumarajena samuṭṭhitā dumā;
Paṭhamavasanto sukho utu,
Ehi ramāma supupphite vane.

Sweet winds blow everywhere,
from trees full of flower-pollen.
Early Spring is a pleasant season—
come enjoy yourself in this flowering forest.

Kusumitasikharā ca pādapā,
Abhigajjantiva māluteritā;
Kā tuyhaṁ rati bhavissati,
Yadi ekā vanamogahissasi.

Trees tipped with flowers
murmur in the wind.
But how can you enjoy yourself,
if you descend into the forest alone?

Vāḷamigasaṅghasevitaṁ,

Kuñjaramattakareṇuloḷitaṁ;
Asahāyikā gantumicchasi,
Rahitaṁ bhiṁsanakaṁ mahāvanaṁ.

Surrounded by a multitude of beasts and snakes,
wild and agitated elephants;
you want to go without a companion
into this lonely, dreadful, and immense forest?

Tapanīyakatāva dhītikā,
Vicarasi cittalateva accharā;
Kāsikasukhumehi vaggubhi,
Sobhasī suvasanehi nūpame.

Like a shiny golden doll,
like a nymph amongst beautiful vines,
you will stand out
wearing the finest linen from Kāsi.

Ahaṁ tava vasānugo siyaṁ,
Yadi viharemase kānanantare;
Na hi matthi tayā piyattaro,
Pāṇo kinnarimandalocane.

I will be under your control,
if we live together in the forest.
Because there is no one more dear to me than you,
creature with the soft eyes of a dryad.

Yadi me vacanaṁ karissasi,
Sukhitā ehi agāramāvasa;
Pāsādanivātavāsinī,
Parikammaṁ te karontu nāriyo.

If you were to say to me:
'Come, let's live a pleasant household life!'
you would live in a sheltered palace

and have women attending you.

Kāsikasukhumāni dhāraya,
Abhiropehi ca mālavaṇṇakaṁ;
Kañcanamaṇimuttakaṁ bahuṁ,
Vividhaṁ ābharaṇaṁ karomi te.

You would wear the finest linen from Kāsi,
as well as garlands and makeup.
I would adorn you
with lots of gold, jewels, and pearls.

Sudhotarajapacchadaṁ subhaṁ,
Gonakatūlikasanthataṁ navaṁ;
Abhiruha sayanaṁ mahāraheṁ,
Candanamaṇḍitasāragandhikaṁ.

You would rest on a fabulous bed with a beautiful blanket,
freshly washed and dyed,
on a brand-new mattress upholstered with wool and
scented with sandalwood.

Uppalaṁ cudakā samuggataṁ,
Yathā taṁ amanussasevitaṁ;
Evaṁ tvaṁ brahmacārinī,
Sakesaṅgesu jaraṁ gamissasi".

But if you live the chaste and holy life,
then like a blue lotus that rises above the water
but is not touched by anyone,
you will wither away all alone."

"Kiṁ te idha sārasammataṁ,
Kuṇapapūramhi susānavaḍḍhane;
Bhedanadhamme kaḷevare,
Yaṁ disvā vimano udikkhasi".

“What do you consider of value here,
in this carcass—full of corpses,
bound for the cemetery, destined to break apart?
What have you seen that makes you so deranged?”

“Akkhīni ca tūriyāriva,
Kinnariyāriva pabbatantare;
Tava me nayanāni dakkhiya,
Bhiyyo kāmaratī pavaḍḍhati.

“Your eyes are like a symphony,
like a dryad in the mountains.
Seeing your eyes
fills me with sensual desire.

Uppalasikharopamāni te,
Vimale hāṭakasannibhe mukhe;
Tava me nayanāni dakkhiya,
Bhiyyo kāmaguṇo pavaḍḍhati.

Your eyes are like lotus flowers
in a face that shines like pure gold.
Seeing your eyes,
my excitement grows ever more.

Api dūragatā saramhase,
Āyatapamhe visuddhadassane;
Na hi matthi tayā piyattaro,
Nayanā kinnarimandalocane”.

Even when we are far apart,
I will remember your long lashes and pure eyes,
because there is no one more dear than you,
with the soft eyes of a dryad.”

“Apathena payātumicchasi,
Candaṁ kīḷanakaṁ gavesasi;

Meruṁ laṅghetumicchasi,
Yo tvaṁ buddhasutaṁ maggayasi.

“You want to walk where there is no path,
you want to take the moon as a toy,
you want to jump over Mount Meru,
you chase after a disciple of the Buddha.

Natthi hi loke sadevake,
Rāgo yatthapi dāni me siyā;
Napi naṁ jānāmi kīriso,
Atha maggena hato samūlako.

There is nothing in this world, even with all its devas
which I could now have craving for.
I do not know what it could be like,
since it has been completely uprooted by the path.

Iṅgālakuyāva ujjhito,
Visapattoriva aggito kato;
Napi naṁ passāmi kīriso,
Atha maggena hato samūlako.

Cast away like burning coal,
destroyed like a worthless bowl of poison.
I do not see what it could be like,
since it has been completely uprooted by the path.

Yassā siyā apaccavekkhitaṁ,
Satthā vā anupāsito siyā;
Tvaṁ tādisikaṁ palobhaya,
Jānantiṁ so imaṁ vihaññasi.

One who has not contemplated,
or has not been close to the Teacher,
may be enticed by you,
but I am one who knows, so you are wasting your time here.

Mayhañhi akkuṭṭhavandite,
Sukhadukkhe ca satī upaṭṭhitā;
Saṅkhatamasubhanti jāniya,
Sabbattheva mano na limpati.

Whether I am reviled or respected,
whether there is pleasure or pain, my mindfulness is stable.
Knowing that conditioned things are not beautiful,
my mind is never stained.

Sāhaṁ sugatassa sāvikā,
Maggaṭṭhaṅgikayānayāyinī;
Uddhaṭasallā anāsavā,
Suññāgāragatā ramāmahaṁ.

I am a female disciple of the one faring well,
I travel with the Eightfold Path as my vehicle.
Free from influences, with darts removed,
I enjoy going to an empty dwelling.

Diṭṭhā hi mayā sucittitā,
Sombhā dārukapillakāni vā;
Tantīhi ca khīlakehi ca,
Vinibaddhā vividhaṁ panaccakā.

I have seen well-painted
wooden puppets of children,
bound with sticks and strings
like a group of little dancers.

Tamhuddhaṭe tantikhīlake,
Vissaṭṭhe vikale parikrite;
Na vindeyya khaṇḍaso kate,
Kimhi tattha manaṁ nivesaye.

But when those sticks and strings are removed,
when everything is untied, non-functional, splayed out,

one could not find anything in its parts,
so where could the mind settle?

Tathūpamā dehakāni maṁ,
Tehi dhammehi vinā na vattanti;
Dhammehi vinā na vattati,
Kimhi tattha manaṁ nivesaye.

Likewise my body parts
do not function without those mindstates;
this being the case,
where could the mind settle?

Yathā haritālena makkhitaṁ,
Addasa cittikaṁ bhittiyā kataṁ;
Tamhi te viparītadassanaṁ,
Saññā mānusikā niratthikā.

It's like seeing a painting on a wall
made with orpiment;
if your vision of it is distorted,
you misperceive it as a human being.

Māyaṁ viya aggato kataṁ,
Supinanteva suvaṇṇapādapaṁ;
Upagacchasi andha rittakaṁ,
Janamajjheriva rupparūpakaṁ.

It is like a supreme illusion,
like a golden tree in a dream.
Blind one, you are getting close to something as meaningless
as a marionette amidst a group of people.

Vaṭṭaniriva koṭarohitā,
Majjhe pubbuḷakā saassukā;
Pīḷakoḷikā cettha jāyati,
Vividhā cakkhuvidhā ca piṇḍitā".

Spinning in a blood-red hole,
engulfed in pus and tears,
here watery tumors are born,
various eye-components balled up together."

Uppāṭiya cārudassanā,
Na ca pajjittha asaṅgamānasā;
"Handa te cakkhuṁ harassu taṁ",
Tassa narassa adāsi tāvade.

She pulled out that charming eye,
and with a mind of non-attachment, she said:
"Well then, take your eye,"
and she gave it to that man.

Tassa ca viramāsi tāvade,
Rāgo tattha khamāpayī ca naṁ;
"Sotthi siyā brahmacārinī,
Na puno edisakaṁ bhavissati".

In that moment his lust dissipated,
and he apologized:
"May you be well living the holy life,
this will not happen again.

"Āsādiya edisaṁ janaṁ,
Aggiṁ pajjalitaṁva liṅgiya;
Gaṇhiya āsīvisaṁ viya,
Api nu sotthi siyā khamehi no".

Assailing such a person,
is like embracing a blazing fire,
or picking up a poisonous snake.
May you be well, forgive me."

Muttā ca tato sā bhikkhunī,
Agamī buddhavarassa santikaṁ;

Passiya varapuññalakkhaṇaṁ,
Cakkhu āsi yathā purāṇakanti.

The bhikkhunī was let go, and from there
she went to the excellent Buddha.
Seeing the characteristic of excellent merit,
her eye was restored.

…
…
Subhā jīvakambavanikā therī ….
The Elder Subhā of Jīvaka's Mango Grove

Tiṁsanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Thirties is finished.

The Chapter of theForties

1. Isidāsītherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Isidāsī

Nagaramhi kusumanāme,
Pāṭaliputtamhi pathaviyā maṇḍe;
Sakyakulakulīnāyo,
Dve bhikkhuniyo hi guṇavatiyo.

In a town with the name of a flower,
Pāṭaliputta, the blest place on earth,
there were two virtuous bhikkhunīs
from the Sakyan clan.

Isidāsī tattha ekā,
Dutiyā bodhīti sīlasampannā ca;
Jhānajjhāyanaratāyo,
Bahussutāyo dhutakilesāyo.

The first one is Isidāsī, the second Bodhī,
with perfect morality,
who enjoy practicing Jhāna,
very learned, with defilements removed.

Tā piṇḍāya caritvā,
Bhattatthaṁ kariya dhotapattāyo;
Rahitamhi sukhanisinnā,
Imā girā abbhudīresuṁ.

After going for alms,
eating their meal, and washing their bowls,
when they were comfortably seated alone,
this is what they said:

“Pāsādikāsi ayye,
Isidāsi vayopi te aparihīno;
Kiṁ disvāna byālikaṁ,

Athāsi nekkhammamanuyuttā”.

“Ayya Isidāsī is charming
and has not aged one single bit.
What fault did you see in the world
that made you intent upon renunciation?”

Evamanuyuñjiyamānā sā,
Rahite dhammadesanākusalā;
Isidāsī vacanamabravi,
“Suṇa bodhi yathāmhi pabbajitā”.

When she was asked this question in confidence,
the one skilled in teaching Dhamma,
Isidāsī, thus spoke:
“Bodhi, listen to the story of my going forth.

“Ujjeniyā puravare,
Mayhaṁ pitā sīlasaṁvuto seṭṭhi;
Tassamhi ekadhītā,
Piyā manāpā ca dayitā ca.

In the excellent town of Ujjeniyā,
my father was a wealthy merchant with morality and restraint.
I was the only daughter of his,
dear, pleasant, and cherished.

Atha me sāketato varakā,
Āgacchumuttamakulīnā;
Seṭṭhī pahūtaratano,
Tassa mamaṁ suṇhamadāsi tāto.

Then men from the most notable families came to Sāketa
to ask for me to marry them.
A wealthy merchant with many jewels,
my father gave me as a daughter-in-law to one of them.

Sassuyā sasurassa ca,

Sāyaṁ pātaṁ paṇāmamupagamma;
Sirasā karomi pāde,
Vandāmi yathāmhi anusiṭṭhā.

Morning and evening
I bowed to both parents in-law,
I paid respects as instructed,
with my head at their feet.

Yā mayhaṁ sāmikassa,
Bhaginiyo bhātuno parijano vā;
Tamekavarakampi disvā,
Ubbiggā āsanaṁ demi.

If I saw any of these honorable people
- a sister, brother,
or attendant of my husband -
I would anxiously give them a seat.

Annena ca pānena ca,
Khajjena ca yañca tattha sannihitaṁ;
Chādemi upanayāmi ca,
Demi ca yaṁ yassa patirūpaṁ.

I arranged, properly covered,
and brought out food, drink,
and other edibles,
and gave to them whatever was proper.

Kālena upaṭṭhahitvā,
Gharaṁ samupagamāmi ummāre;
Dhovantī hatthapāde,
Pañjalikā sāmikamupemi.

I would get ready at the right time,
go to the house's foyer,
and after rinsing my hands and feet,

I would draw near my husband in añjali.

Kocchaṁ pasādaṁ añjaniñca,
Ādāsakañca gaṇhitvā;
Parikammakārikā viya,
Sayameva patiṁ vibhūsemi.

With a brush, hair-tie,
ointment box, and a mirror,
like a personal attendant,
I would beautify my own husband.

Sayameva odanaṁ sādhayāmi,
Sayameva bhājanaṁ dhovantī;
Mātāva ekaputtakaṁ,
Tathā bhattāraṁ paricarāmi.

I prepared the rice myself,
I washed the bowl myself,
like a mother with her only son,
in the same way I looked after my husband.

Evaṁ maṁ bhattikataṁ,
Anurattaṁ kārikaṁ nihatamānaṁ;
Uṭṭhāyikaṁ analasaṁ,
Sīlavatiṁ dussate bhattā.

Thus in this way I offered service,
a faithful servant free of pride,
humble, energetic, and virtuous,
yet the husband was angry at me.

So mātarañca pitarañca,
Bhaṇati 'āpucchahaṁ gamissāmi;
Isidāsiyā na saha vacchaṁ,
Ekāgārehaṁ saha vatthuṁ'.

To his mother and father,
he said: ‘Unquestionably, I will go!
I will not stay with Isidāsī,
living together in one house.’

‘Mā evaṁ putta avaca,
Isidāsī paṇḍitā paribyattā;
Uṭṭhāyikā analasā,
Kiṁ tuyhaṁ na rocate putta’.

‘Please son, do not say that!
Isidāsi is wise and capable,
she is energetic and virtuous—
why does she displease you, son?’

‘Na ca me hiṁsati kiñci,
Na cahaṁ isidāsiyā saha vacchaṁ;
Dessāva me alaṁ me,
Apucchāhaṁ gamissāmi’.

‘She does not cause me any harm,
but I will not stay here with Isidāsī.
I just detest her, and I’ve had enough!
Unquestionably, I will go!’

Tassa vacanaṁ suṇitvā,
Sassu sasuro ca maṁ apucchiṁsu;
‘Kissa tayā aparaddhaṁ,
Bhaṇa vissaṭṭhā yathābhūtaṁ’.

Upon hearing his words,
my parents-in-law asked me:
‘What have you done wrong?
Speak clearly and truthfully!’

‘Napihaṁ aparajjhaṁ kiñci,
Napi hiṁsemi na bhaṇāmi dubbacanaṁ;

Kiṁ sakkā kātuyye,
Yaṁ maṁ viddessate bhattā'.

'But I have not done anything wrong in any way!
I caused no harm, I did not speak improperly!
How is it possible
that my husband detests me?'

Te maṁ pitugharaṁ paṭinayiṁsu,
Vimanā dukhena adhibhūtā;
Puttamanurakkhamānā,
'Jitāmhase rūpiniṁ lakkhiṁ'.

They led me back to my father's house,
displeased and overpowered by suffering:
'By protecting our son,
we have lost the good fortune of having this beautiful woman.'

Atha maṁ adāsi tāto,
Aḍḍhassa gharamhi dutiyakulikassa;
Tato upaḍḍhasuṅkena,
Yena maṁ vindatha seṭṭhi.

Then my father gave me to another man
coming from a wealthy family.
This wealthy merchant got me
for half the dowry of the previous one.

Tassapi gharamhi māsaṁ,
Avasiṁ atha sopi maṁ paṭiccharayi;
Dāsīva upaṭṭhahantiṁ,
Adūsikaṁ sīlasampannaṁ.

I lived in his house for a month,
I waited on him like a slave,
innocent, with perfect morality,
then he rejected me.

Bhikkhāya ca vicarantaṁ,
Damakaṁ dantaṁ me pitā bhaṇati;
‘Hohisi me jāmātā,
Nikkhipa poṭṭhiñca ghaṭikañca’.

My father then saw a man going about for alms -
a tamed man who tames others - and said:
‘You, sage, will be my daughter’s husband:
put down the rags and begging-bowl!’

Sopi vasitvā pakkhaṁ,
Atha tātaṁ bhaṇati ‘dehi me poṭṭhiṁ;
Ghaṭikañca mallakañca,
Punapi bhikkhaṁ carissāmi’.

After a fortnight,
he told my father: ‘Give me back my rags,
begging bowl, and cup.
I will resume going for alms.’

Atha naṁ bhaṇatī tāto,
Ammā sabbo ca me ñātigaṇavaggo;
‘Kiṁ te na kīrati idha,
Bhaṇa khippaṁ taṁ te karihi’ti.

Then my father, mother,
and all of my relatives, asked him:
‘What was not done for you here?
Speak, and it will be quickly done for you!’

Evaṁ bhaṇito bhaṇati,
‘Yadi me attā sakkoti alaṁ mayhaṁ;
Isidāsiyā na saha vacchaṁ,
Ekagharehaṁ saha vatthuṁ’.

When this was said he replied:
‘Enough! I am able to look after myself.

I will not stay with Isidāsī,
living together in one house.'

Vissajjito gato so,
Ahampi ekākinī vicintemi;
'Āpucchitūna gacchaṁ,
Marituye vā pabbajissaṁ vā'.

He is lost and gone,
and I, all alone, consider:
'After asking for permission, I will leave,
and either die or go forth.'

Atha ayyā jinadattā,
Āgacchī gocarāya caramānā;
Tātakulaṁ vinayadharī,
Bahussutā sīlasampannā.

Then Ayyā Jinadattā
came traveling through the area.
She was of my father's clan, upholder of the vinaya,
very learned, with perfect morality.

Taṁ disvāna amhākaṁ,
Uṭṭhāyāsanaṁ tassā paññāpayiṁ;
Nisinnāya ca pāde,
Vanditvā bhojanamadāsiṁ.

When I saw her,
I got up and prepared a seat for her.
I sat down at her feet,
paid respects, and offered food.

Annena ca pānena ca,
Khajjena ca yañca tattha sannihitaṁ;
Santappayitvā avacaṁ,
'Ayye icchāmi pabbajituṁ'.

I arranged food, drink,
and other edibles.
Having satisfied her, I said:
‘Ayya, I desire to go forth!’

Atha maṁ bhaṇatī tāto,
‘Idheva puttaka carāhi tvaṁ dhammaṁ;
Annena ca pānena ca,
Tappaya samaṇe dvijātī ca’.

Then my father spoke thus:
‘My little child, go and practice the Dhamma right here!
With food and drink,
you will satiate contemplatives and twice-born brahmins.’

Athahaṁ bhaṇāmi tātaṁ,
Rodantī añjaliṁ paṇāmetvā;
‘Pāpañhi mayā pakataṁ,
Kammaṁ taṁ nijjaressāmi’.

In tears, I said to my father,
with my hands raised in añjali:
‘Evil deeds were done by me in the past,
I will grind down that karma.’

Atha maṁ bhaṇatī tāto,
‘Pāpuṇa bodhiñca aggadhammañca;
Nibbānañca labhassu,
Yaṁ sacchikarī dvipadaseṭṭho’.

Then my father said to me:
‘Reach enlightenment, the highest Dhamma,
Obtain Nirvana,
which was realized by the foremost human.’

Mātāpitū abhivādayitvā,
Sabbañca ñātigaṇavaggaṁ;

Sattāhaṁ pabbajitā,
Tisso vijjā aphassayiṁ.

I paid respects to mother and father,
and all my relatives.
A week from my going-forth,
I attained the three knowledges.

Jānāmi attano satta,
Jātiyo yassayaṁ phalavipāko;
Taṁ tava ācikkhissaṁ,
Taṁ ekamanā nisāmehi.

I know my previous seven lives,
which this current birth is its fruit and result.
Single-mindedly pay attention,
and I will explain it to you.

Nagaramhi erakacche,
Suvaṇṇakāro ahaṁ pahūtadhano;
Yobbanamadena matto,
So paradāraṁ asevihaṁ.

In a town in marshy lands,
I was a goldsmith with abundant wealth.
Intoxicated with youth,
I had an affair with another's wife.

Sohaṁ tato cavitvā,
Nirayamhi apaccisaṁ ciraṁ;
Pakko tato ca uṭṭhahitvā,
Makkaṭiyā kucchimokkamiṁ.

When I fell away from there,
I was tormented in hell for a long time.
After that torment was over,
I entered the belly of a female monkey.

Sattāhajātakaṁ maṁ,
Mahākapi yūthapo nillacchesi;
Tassetaṁ kammaphalaṁ,
Yathāpi gantvāna paradāraṁ.

A week after I had been born,
the leader of the monkeys castrated me.
That is the fruit of my karma,
because I went with another's wife.

Sohaṁ tato cavitvā,
Kālaṁ karitvā sindhavāraññe;
Kāṇāya ca khañjāya ca,
Eḷakiyā kucchimokkamiṁ.

When I fell away from there,
after my death in the Sindhava forest,
I entered the belly
of a one-eyed lame goat.

Dvādasa vassāni ahaṁ,
Nillacchito dārake parivahitvā;
Kiminābhaṭṭho akallo,
Yathāpi gantvāna paradāraṁ.

For twelve years,
castrated, I carried children on my back.
I was feeble, and full of worms,
because I went with another's wife.

Sohaṁ tato cavitvā,
Govāṇijakassa gāviyā jāto;
Vaccho lākhātambo,
Nillacchito dvādase māse.

When I fell away from there,
I was born as a cow owned by a cattle-merchant.

A copper-colored calf,
I was castrated after twelve months.

Voḍhūna naṅgalamahaṁ,
Sakaṭañca dhārayāmi;
Andhovaṭṭo akallo,
Yathāpi gantvāna paradāraṁ.

I dragged a big plow,
I pulled a cart,
afflicted with blindness and unwell,
because I went with another's wife.

Sohaṁ tato cavitvā,
Vīthiyā dāsiyā ghare jāto;
Neva mahilā na puriso,
Yathāpi gantvāna paradāraṁ.

When I fell away from there,
I was born as a man from a street-slave,
not from an honorable woman,
because I went with another's wife.

Tiṁsativassamhi mato,
Sākaṭikakulamhi dārikā jātā;
Kapaṇamhi appabhoge,
Dhanika purisapātabahulamhi.

Dead by the age of thirty,
I was born as a girl in a family of cart-makers,
wretched and poor,
often falling into debt.

Taṁ maṁ tato satthavāho,
Ussannāya vipulāya vaḍḍhiyā;
Okaḍḍhati vilapantiṁ,
Acchinditvā kulagharasmā.

Then a caravan-leader,
in order to increase his already abundant wealth,
severed me from my family,
as I was dragged away wailing.

Atha soḷasame vasse,
Disvā maṁ pattayobbanaṁ kaññaṁ;
Orundhatassa putto,
Giridāso nāma nāmena.

When he saw that I was sixteen years old,
a young woman,
I was taken by his son,
named Giridāsa.

Tassapi aññā bhariyā,
Sīlavatī guṇavatī yasavatī ca;
Anurattā bhattāraṁ,
Tassāhaṁ viddesanamakāsiṁ.

He had another wife,
virtuous, with good qualities, glorious,
enamored with her husband.
I filled her with hatred.

Tassetaṁ kammaphalaṁ,
Yaṁ maṁ apakīritūna gacchanti;
Dāsīva upaṭṭhahantiṁ,
Tassapi anto kato mayā"ti.

That is the fruit of my karma:
they cast me off and left,
setting me up as a slave.
But I have now brought this to an end."

…
Isidāsī therī ….

The Elder Isidāsī

Cattālīsanipāto niṭṭhito.
The Chapter of the Forties is finished.

The Great Chapter

1. Sumedhātherīgāthā:
Verses of the Elder Sumedhā

Mantāvatiyā nagare,
Rañño koñcassa aggamahesiyā;
Dhītā āsiṁ sumedhā,
Pasāditā sāsanakarehi.

In the city of Mantāvatī,
of king Koñca and his main queen-consort,
she was the daughter Sumedhā,
confident in those complying with the Teaching.

Sīlavatī cittakathā,
Bahussutā buddhasāsane vinitā;
Mātāpitaro upagamma,
Bhaṇati "ubhayo nisāmetha.

Virtuous, eloquent,
very learned, and disciplined in the teaching of the Buddha.
She approached her mother and father and said:
"Both of you, listen!

Nibbānābhiratāhaṁ,
Asassataṁ bhavagataṁ yadipi dibbaṁ;
Kimaṅgaṁ pana tucchā kāmā,
Appassādā bahuvighātā.

I seek the joy of Nirvana,
as all states of existence - even divine - are temporary.
Sensual pleasures are worthless without fail:
they bring little satisfaction, and much distress.

Kāmā kaṭukā āsī,
Visūpamā yesu mucchitā bālā;
Te dīgharattaṁ niraye,

Samappitā haññante dukkhitā.

Fools become infatuated with sensual pleasures
that are bitter like snake-poison.
They are consigned to hell for long periods of time,
where they experience injury and pain.

Socanti pāpakammā,
Vinipāte pāpavaddhino sadā;
Kāyena ca vācāya ca,
Manasā ca asaṁvutā bālā.

Those who have done evil deeds feel sorrow
in their state of downfall, where they constantly do even more evil.
Unrestrained with body, speech,
and mind,

Bālā te duppaññā,
Acetanā dukkhasamudayoruddhā;
Desente ajānantā,
Na bujjhare ariyasaccāni.

lacking wisdom,
not intending to stop the arising of suffering,
and not knowing the teachings,
such fools do not recognize the Noble Truths.

Saccāni amma buddhavaradesitāni,
Te bahutarā ajānantā ye;
Abhinandanti bhavagataṁ,
Pihenti devesu upapattiṁ.

Mother, most people do not understand
the truths superbly taught by the Buddha.
They are delighted with states of existence,
they long for rebirth as Devas.

Devesupi upapatti,

Asassatā bhavagate aniccamhi;
Na ca santasanti bālā,
Punappunaṁ jāyitabbassa.

But rebirth as a Deva
is a finite and temporary state of existence.
Fools are not frightened
of being born again and again.

Cattāro vinipātā,
Duve ca gatiyo kathañci labbhanti;
Na ca vinipātagatānaṁ,
Pabbajjā atthi nirayesu.

From the four places of downfall,
it is hard to obtain the two higher destinations.
For one gone to a place of downfall,
there is no going forth in the hell realms.

Anujānātha maṁ ubhayo,
Pabbajituṁ dasabalassa pāvacane;
Appossukkā ghaṭissaṁ,
Jātimaraṇappahānāya.

The two of you should allow me
to go forth in the doctrine of the one who has ten powers.
Living at ease, I would be able to strive
for the abandoning of birth and death.

Kiṁ bhavagate abhinanditena,
Kāyakalinā asārena;
Bhavataṇhāya nirodhā,
Anujānātha pabbajissāmi.

How can there be delight in a state of existence
with a worthless body devoid of substance?
Allow me to go forth,

so that I may bring an end to the craving for existence.

Buddhānaṁ uppādo vivajjito,
Akkhaṇo khaṇo laddho;
Sīlāni brahmacariyaṁ,
Yāvajīvaṁ na dūseyyaṁ".

One who is distant from the arising of the Buddhas
has no opportunity.
I will not spoil the virtues of the spiritual life,
for the rest of my life."

Evaṁ bhaṇati sumedhā,
Mātāpitaro "na tāva āhāraṁ;
Āharissaṁ gahaṭṭhā,
Maraṇavasaṁ gatāva hessāmi".

Then Sumedhā said to her parents:
"I will not take food
from a householder,
I will be overtaken by death."

Mātā dukkhitā rodati pitā ca,
Assā sabbaso samabhihato;
Ghaṭenti saññāpetuṁ,
Pāsādatale chamāpatitaṁ.

Distressed, her mother and father cry,
completely overpowered.
Together they try to convince her,
while she is lying on the floor of the palace.

"Uṭṭhehi puttaka kiṁ soci,
Tena dinnāsi vāraṇavatimhi;
Rājā anīkaratto,
Abhirūpo tassa tvaṁ dinnā.

“Rise up little child, what is this sadness?
You are engaged to be married in Vāraṇavatī.
King Anīkaratta is handsome
and you have been given to him.

Aggamahesī bhavissasi,
Anikarattassa rājino bhariyā;
Sīlāni brahmacariyaṁ,
Pabbajjā dukkarā puttaka.

You will become chief queen-consort,
the wife of king Anīkaratta.
Holding precepts, keeping celibacy,
life as an outcast— these are difficult to do, little child.

Rajje āṇā dhanamissariyaṁ,
Bhogā sukhā daharikāsi;
Bhuñjāhi kāmabhoge,
Vāreyyaṁ hotu te putta”.

As a queen you will have authority, wealth, sovereignty,
fortune, and pleasure.
You are a young lady, enjoy sensual pleasures!
Get married, child!”

Atha ne bhaṇati sumedhā,
“Mā edisikāni bhavagatamasāraṁ;
Pabbajjā vā hohiti,
Maraṇaṁ vā me na ceva vāreyyaṁ.

Then Sumedhā replied:
“Who would want such a worthless state of existence?
Either I will go forth,
or I will die, but I will not marry.

Kimiva pūtikāyamasuciṁ,
Savanagandhaṁ bhayānakaṁ kuṇapaṁ;

Abhisaṁviseyyaṁ bhastaṁ,
Asakiṁ paggharitaṁ asucipuṇṇaṁ.

What is this impure putrid body,
a dreadful corpse with a tainted smell?
Who would want to enter
this oozing skin-bag full of impurities?

Kimiva tahaṁ jānantī,
Vikūlakaṁ maṁsasoṇitupalittaṁ;
Kimikulālayaṁ sakuṇabhattaṁ,
Kaḷevaraṁ kissa diyyati.

What do they know about this
disgusting thing plastered in flesh and blood,
a corpse which will be given as food
to worms and birds?

Nibbuyhati susānaṁ,
Aciraṁ kāyo apetaviññāṇo;
Chuddho kaḷiṅgaraṁ viya,
Jigucchamānehi ñātīhi.

Before long it will be taken to the cemetery,
a body deprived of consciousness,
left there like a discarded log,
by disgusted relatives.

Chuddhūna naṁ susāne,
Parabhattaṁ nhāyanti jigucchantā;
Niyakā mātāpitaro,
Kiṁ pana sādhāraṇā janatā.

Thrown away in the cemetery,
it becomes food for others.
Even one's own mother and father are disgusted and go bathe themselves—
what can be expected from everyone else?

Ajjhositā asāre,
Kaḷevare aṭṭhinhārusaṅghāte;
Kheḷassuccārassava,
Paripuṇṇe pūtikāyamhi.

Hanging on to this worthless corpse,
bones bound together by tendons
in this putrid body
full of excrement and saliva.

Yo naṁ vinibbhujitvā,
Abbhantaramassa bāhiraṁ kayirā;
Gandhassa asahamānā,
Sakāpi mātā jigucchеyya.

One who dismembered it,
bringing the internal parts out,
would not be able to endure its smell—
even their own mother would be disgusted.

Khandhadhātuāyatanaṁ,
Saṅkhataṁ jātimūlakaṁ dukkhaṁ;
Yoniso anuvicinantī,
Vāreyyaṁ kissa iccheyyaṁ.

The khandhas, elements, and sense domains,
are conditioned, rooted in birth, suffering.
Pondering wisely,
why would I wish to marry?

Divase divase tisatti,
Satāni navanavā pateyyuṁ kāyamhi;
Vassasatampi ca ghāto,
Seyyo dukkhassa cevaṁ khayo.

If, day after day three hundred spears
would constantly attack the body,

a hundred years of this torment
would be good if then there was the end of suffering.

Ajjhupagacche ghātaṁ,
Yo viññāyevaṁ satthuno vacanaṁ;
‘Dīgho tesaṁ saṁsāro,
Punappunaṁ haññamānānaṁ’.

I would consent to this torment,
as would anyone who has heard the Teacher’s words:
‘Long is the cycle of birth and death
for those who are slain again and again.’

Devesu manussesu ca,
Tiracchānayoniyā asurakāye;
Petesu ca nirayesu ca,
Aparimitā dissare ghātā.

Among Devas and among humans,
among animals and among asuras,
among petas and in the hell realms,
no limit to torment is seen.

Ghātā nirayesu bahū,
Vinipātagatassa pīḷiyamānassa;
Devesupi attāṇaṁ,
Nibbānasukhā paraṁ natthi.

There is much torment in the hell realms,
for those who are oppressed in the lower realms.
Even among the Devas there is no safety,
and no happiness higher than Nirvana.

Pattā te nibbānaṁ,
Ye yuttā dasabalassa pāvacane;
Appossukkā ghaṭenti,
Jātimaraṇappahānāya.

Those who have attained Nirvana,
committed to the words of the one who has ten powers;
Living at ease, they strive
to abandon birth and death.

Ajjeva tātabhinikkha-
Missaṁ bhogehi kiṁ asārehi;
Nibbinnā me kāmā,
Vantasamā tālavatthukatā".

Today, father, I will leave behind
this worthless wealth.
I am disenchanted with sensual pleasures,
I am at peace because I have renounced sensuality; it has been made like a palm-stump."

Sā cevaṁ bhaṇati pitara-
Manīkaratto ca yassa sā dinnā;
Upayāsi vāraṇavate,
Vāreyyamupaṭṭhite kāle.

As she said this to her father,
Anīkaratta, to whom she had been engaged to be married,
approached Vāraṇavatī
at the time arranged for the wedding.

Atha asitanicitamuduke,
Kese khaggena chindiya sumedhā;
Pāsādaṁ pidahitvā,
Paṭhamajjhānaṁ samāpajji.

Then Sumedhā cut off her thick, soft, dark hair
with a sword,
closed the palace,
and entered the first Jhāna.

Sā ca tahiṁ samāpannā,

Anīkaratto ca āgato nagaraṁ;
Pāsāde ca sumedhā,
Aniccasaññaṁ subhāveti.

She had already entered it,
when Anīkaratta came to the town.
Then in the palace, Sumedhā
cultivated well the perception of impermanence.

Sā ca manasi karoti,
Anīkaratto ca āruhī turitaṁ;
Maṇikanakabhūsitaṅgo,
Katañjalī yācati sumedhaṁ.

As she fixed the mind intently on this,
Anīkaratta quickly ascended.
With limbs adorned with gold and gems,
in añjali, he implored Sumedhā:

“Rajje āṇādhanamissa-
Riyaṁ bhogā sukhā daharikāsi;
Bhuñjāhi kāmabhoge,
Kāmasukhā dullabhā loke.

“As a queen there is authority, wealth, sovereignty,
fortune, and pleasure.
You are a young lady, enjoy sensual pleasures!
Sensual pleasures are difficult to obtain in this world!

Nissaṭṭhaṁ te rajjaṁ,
Bhoge bhuñjassu dehi dānāni;
Mā dummanā ahosi,
Mātāpitaro te dukkhitā”.

Royalty has been handed over to you:
enjoy wealth, give gifts!
Do not be down-hearted,

your mother and father are suffering."

Taṁ taṁ bhaṇati sumedhā,
Kāmehi anatthikā vigatamohā;
"Mā kāme abhinandi,
Kāmesvādīnavaṁ passa.

Sumedhā, who had no need for sensual pleasures
and was free of delusion, said to him:
"Do not delight in sensual pleasures!
Look at the drawbacks of sensual pleasures!

Cātuddīpo rājā,
Mandhātā āsi kāmabhoginamaggo;
Atitto kālaṅkato,
Na cassa paripūritā icchā.

Mandhātā, king of four islands,
embraced the path of enjoying sensuality.
He died unsatisfied,
not with desires fulfilled.

Satta ratanāni vasseyya,
Vuṭṭhimā dasadisā samantena;
Na catthi titti kāmānaṁ,
Atittāva maranti narā.

Even if the seven kinds of gems were to pour down from the sky
like rain in all ten directions,
not even then would there be satisfaction in sensual pleasures:
human beings die unsatisfied.

Asisūnūpamā kāmā,
kāmā sappasiropamā;
Ukkopamā anudahanti,
aṭṭhikaṅkala sannibhā.

Sensual pleasures are like a knife on a butcher's block,
sensual pleasures are like a snake's head.
They burn like a torch,
they resemble a skeleton.

Aniccā adhuvā kāmā,
bahudukkhā mahāvisā;
Ayoguḷova santatto,
aghamūlā dukhapphalā.

Sensual pleasures are impermanent, unstable,
much suffering, highly poisonous;
A heated iron ball,
the root of calamity, resulting in suffering.

Rukkhapphalūpamā kāmā,
maṁsapesūpamā dukhā;
Supinopamā vañcaniyā,
kāmā yācitakūpamā.

Sensual pleasures are like tree-fruit,
like a piece of meat, they are suffering;
Sensual pleasures are deceitful as a dream,
like borrowed goods.

Sattisūlūpamā kāmā,
rogo gaṇḍo aghaṁ nigharṁ;
Aṅgārakāsusadisā,
aghamūlaṁ bhayaṁ vadho.

Sensual pleasures are like the stake of a spear,
a disease, an abscess, a calamity, an affliction.
Like a fire pit,
the root of calamity, fear, and distruction.

Evaṁ bahudukkhā kāmā,
akkhātā antarāyikā;

Gacchatha na me bhavagate,
vissāso atthi attano.

In this way sensual pleasures have been declared to bring much suffering,
and to be obstructive.
Go, not to me, but to the Buddha!
My own confidence is in him.

Kiṁ mama paro karissati,
Attano sīsamhi ḍayhamānamhi;
Anubandhe jarāmaraṇe,
Tassa ghātāya ghaṭitabbaṁ".

What can another do for me,
when their own head is on fire?
When one is bound by birth and death,
one should strive for its end."

Dvāraṁ apāpuritvānahaṁ,
Mātāpitaro anīkarattañca;
Disvāna chamaṁ nisinne,
Rodante idamavocaṁ.

After she opened the door,
and saw mother, father, and Anīkaratta
sitting down on the ground crying,
she said:

"Dīgho bālānaṁ saṁsāro,
Punappunañca rodataṁ;
Anamatagge pitu maraṇe,
Bhātu vadhe attano ca vadhe.

"Long is the cycle of birth and death for fools,
they cry again and again,
without beginning or end for the death of the father,
the death of the brother, and one's own death.

Assu thaññaṁ rudhiraṁ,
Saṁsāraṁ anamataggato saratha;
Sattānaṁ saṁsarataṁ,
Sarāhi aṭṭhīnañca sannicayaṁ.

Tears, mother's milk, blood,
you move along in the cycle of birth and death without beginning or end.
Bear in mind the pile of bones
of all these sentient beings going through one life after the other.

Sara caturodadhī,
Upanīte assuthaññarudhiramhi;
Sara ekakappamaṭṭhīnaṁ,
Sañcayaṁ vipulena samaṁ.

Bear in mind that all the tears, mother milk, and blood
could fill the four oceans.
Bear in mind the pile of bones of one world cycle,
would be just as abundant.

Anamatagge saṁsarato,
Mahiṁ jambudīpamupanītaṁ;
Kolaṭṭhimattaguḷikā,
Mātā mātusveva nappahonti.

Saṃsaric existence is without beginning or end,
as vast as the land of Jampudīpa.
Even if the earth was made into little balls the size of a jujube seed,
it still would not add up to all the mothers among mothers.

Tiṇakaṭṭhasākhāpalāsaṁ,
Upanītaṁ anamataggato sara;
Caturaṅgulikā ghaṭikā,
Pitupitusveva nappahonti.

Bear in mind all the grass, wood, branches, and foliage,
carried along since beginningless time.

Even if they were made into twigs each only the size of four fingers,
they would still not add up to all of fathers among fathers.

Sara kāṇakacchapaṁ pubba-
Samudde aparato ca yugachiddaṁ;
Siraṁ tassa ca paṭimukkaṁ,
Manussalābhamhi opammaṁ.

Bear in mind the one-eyed turtle in the eastern sea,
and, far away, a block of wood with a hole in it;
the chance of gaining a human rebirth
is like the chance of putting one's head through that hole.

Sara rūpaṁ pheṇapiṇḍopa-
Massa kāyakalino asārassa;
Khandhe passa anicce,
Sarāhi niraye bahuvighāte.

Bear in mind the form of this miserable body,
without any substance, like a lump of foam.
See the khandhas as impermanent,
bear in mind that there is much agony in hell.

Sara kaṭasiṁ vaḍḍhente,
Punappunaṁ tāsu tāsu jātīsu;
Sara kumbhīlabhayāni ca,
Sarāhi cattāri saccāni.

Bear in mind those filling up the cemetery,
again and again, in all those lives.
Bear in mind the danger of crocodiles,
and bear in mind the four truths.

Amatamhi vijjamāne,
Kiṁ tava pañcakaṭukena pītena;
Sabbā hi kāmaratiyo,
Kaṭukatarā pañcakaṭukena.

Knowing about the deathless,
why would you indulge in the five bitter drinks?
For all delight in sensual pleasures,
is more bitter than the five bitter drinks.

Amatamhi vijjamāne,
Kiṁ tava kāmehi ye pariḷāhā;
Sabbā hi kāmaratiyo,
Jalitā kuthitā kampitā santāpitā.

Knowing about the deathless,
why would you set yourself on fire with sensual pleasures?
For all delight in sensual pleasures
is burning, boiling, trembling, aglow.

Asapattamhi samāne,
Kiṁ tava kāmehi ye bahusapattā;
Rājaggicoraudakappiyehi,
Sādhāraṇā kāmā bahusapattā.

When one can be without enmity,
why would you want the many enemies that come with sensual pleasures?
Like rulers, fires, thieves, and other unpleasant things,
sensual pleasures are common and bring many enemies.

Mokkhamhi vijjamāne,
Kiṁ tava kāmehi yesu vadhabandho;
Kāmesu hi asakāmā,
Vadhabandhadukhāni anubhonti.

Knowing freedom,
why would you want the imprisonment of sensual pleasures?
For sensual pleasures are undesirable
and result in the suffering of imprisonment.

Ādīpitā tiṇukkā,
Gaṇhantaṁ dahanti neva muñcantaṁ;

Ukkopamā hi kāmā,
Dahanti ye te na muñcanti.

As a blazing grass torch
burns one who holds it and does not let it go,
sensual pleasures are like a torch:
they burn the one who does not let go of them.

Mā appakassa hetu,
Kāmasukhassa vipulaṁ jahī sukhaṁ;
Mā puthulomova baḷisaṁ,
Gilitvā pacchā vihaññasi.

Do not renounce abundant happiness
for the sake of the minute happiness of sensual pleasure.
Do not be like the fish who swallows the hook,
and is then slain.

Kāmaṁ kāmesu damassu,
Tāva sunakhova saṅkhalābaddho;
Kāhinti khu taṁ kāmā,
Chātā sunakhaṁva caṇḍālā.

One should willingly train oneself in regards to sensual pleasures.
You are like a dog bound by a chain:
sensual pleasures will attack you
like hungry savages would a dog.

Aparimitañca dukkhaṁ,
Bahūni ca cittadomanassāni;
Anubhohisi kāmayutto,
Paṭinissaja addhuve kāme.

Yoked to sensual pleasure,
you will experience unlimited suffering,
and much mental distress.
Give up these unstable sensual pleasures!

Ajaramhi vijjamāne,
Kiṁ tava kāmehi yesu jarā;
Maraṇabyādhigahitā,
Sabbā sabbattha jātiyo.

When there is the undecaying,
why would you want sensual pleasures, which are subject to decay?
All rebirths in all places are
seized by death and sickness.

Idamajaramidamamaraṁ,
Idamajarāmaraṁ padamasokaṁ;
Asapattamasambādhaṁ,
Akhalitamabhayaṁ nirupatāpaṁ.

This is non-decay, this is non-death,
this is non-decay and non-death, the path of sorrowlessness.
Without enmity, unobstructed,
unfaltering, fearless, not afflicted.

Adhigatamidaṁ bahūhi,
Amataṁ ajjāpi ca labhanīyamidaṁ;
Yo yoniso payuñjati,
Na ca sakkā aghaṭamānena".

Attained by many,
the deathless state even today can be obtained in this way:
it is possible by whomever wisely commits themselves,
but not without striving."

Evaṁ bhaṇati sumedhā,
Saṅkhāragate ratiṁ alabhamānā;
Anunentī anikarattaṁ,
Kese ca chamaṁ khipi sumedhā.

Thus spoke Sumedhā,
without desire for any conditioned things.

Teaching Anīkaratta in this way,
Sumedhā threw her hair on the ground.

Uṭṭhāya anikaratto,
Pañjaliko yācatassā pitaraṁ so;
“Vissajjetha sumedhaṁ,
Pabbajituṁ vimokkhasaccadassā”.

Anīkaratta stood up and,
with hands in añjali, implored her father:
“Set free Sumedhā,
to go forth for liberation and seeking truth.”

Vissajjitā mātāpitūhi,
pabbaji sokabhayabhītā;
Cha abhiññā sacchikatā,
aggaphalaṁ sikkhamānāya.

Released by mother and father,
she went forth, leaving behind fear and sorrow.
She realized the six special knowledges,
the highest fruit for one who is training.

Acchariyamabbhutaṁ taṁ,
Nibbānaṁ āsi rājakaññāya;
Pubbenivāsacaritaṁ,
Yathā byākari pacchime kāle.

Wonderful and extraordinary
was the Nirvana of the princess.
This is a story of some of her past lives
that was explained near the end of her life:

“Bhagavati koṇāgamane,
Saṅghārāmamhi navanivesamhi;
Sakhiyo tisso janiyo,
Vihāradānaṁ adāsimha.

“In the Buddha Koṇāgamana’s time,
in a new settlement in the Saṅgha’s park,
myself and three friends,
gave the gift of a monastic dwelling.

Dasakkhattuṁ satakkhattuṁ,
Dasasatakkhattuṁ satāni ca satakkhattuṁ;
Devesu uppajjimha,
Ko pana vādo manussesu.

Ten times, a hundred times,
hundred and hundreds of times,
I was born as a Deva,
not to mention among humans.

Devesu mahiddhikā ahumha,
Mānusakamhi ko pana vādo;
Sattaratanassa mahesī,
Itthiratanaṁ ahaṁ āsiṁ.

When we were amongst the devas we had great psychic power,
not to mention among humans.
I was a queen of seven jewels,
a woman like a jewel.

So hetu so pabhavo,
Taṁ mūlaṁ sāva sāsane khantī;
Taṁ paṭhamasamodhānaṁ,
Taṁ dhammaratāya nibbānaṁ.

This is the cause, the origin,
and root of my acceptance of the teachings.
That was my first contact,
enjoying the Dhamma and Nirvana.

Evaṁ karonti ye sadda-
Hanti vacanaṁ anomapaññassa;

Nibbindanti bhavagate,
Nibbinditvā virajjantī”ti.

This is how they act, those who have faith
in the words of superior wisdom.
They are disenchanted with states of existence,
and after becoming disenchanted, they become dispassionate.”

Itthaṁ sudaṁ sumedhā therī gāthāyo abhāsitthāti.
Thus Sumedhā the Elder spoke these verses.

Mahānipāto niṭṭhito.
The Great Chapter is finished.

Samattā therīgāthāyo
Complete is the Therīgathā.

Gāthāsatāni cattāri,
asīti puna cuddasa;
Theriyekuttarasatā,
sabbā tā āsavakkhayāti.

Therīgāthāpāḷi niṭṭhitā.
The Verses of the Elder Bhikkhunīs are finished.

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